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SUPER
WINES**
for the holiday
season
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Puerto Rican Feast

An island holiday calls for luscious roast pork

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*Lobster Fra Diavolo
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the recipe*

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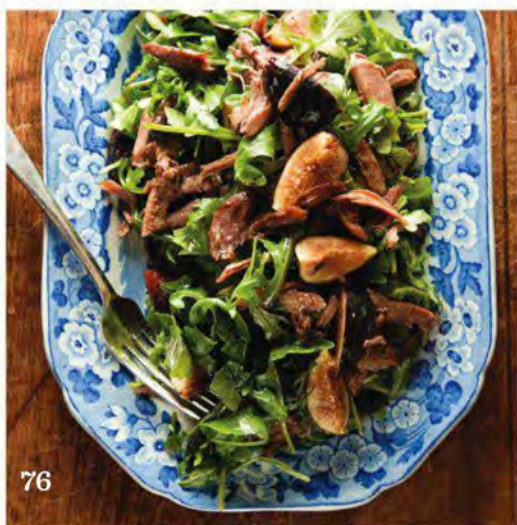
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SAVEUR



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Features

76 The Glories of Goose

A whole roasted goose calls to mind Dickensian feasts and Christmases past, but it still makes a spectacular, profoundly satisfying centerpiece for the holiday table. Whether you stuff it with a savory blend of chestnuts, Brussels sprouts, onion, and bacon; use its luscious fat to cook root vegetables; or construct a rich and creamy terrine from its prized liver, there's plenty of joy to be found in this versatile bird. *By Francine Prose*

53 Italian America

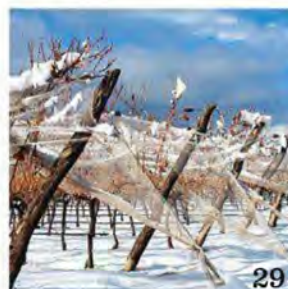
What would American food be without pizza, lasagne, and spaghetti and meatballs? In this special package, we celebrate the ingenuity, *abbondanza*, and deliciousness that Italian immigrants have contributed to the way we eat. From escarole soup to sausage and peppers, we share some of our favorite recipes from the Italian-American kitchen. *By John Mariani, Lou Di Palo, Marne Setton, Rina Oh, Greg Ferro, Jane and Michael Stern, James Oseland, Dana Bowen, Frank Castronovo, and Frank Falcinelli*

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To some, Christmas means snow and nights spent by the fire. In Puerto Rico, the days are hot and sunny, and the celebration lasts for weeks. For one Puerto Rican family, the holiday means coming together to cook beloved festive dishes, including fried finger foods made from plantains and yautia, crisp-skinned spit-roasted pig, and *coquito*, a luxurious coconut-milk enriched eggnog that is uniquely Puerto Rican. *By Kathleen Squires*

Cover Lobster in Spicy Tomato Sauce PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD COLEMAN

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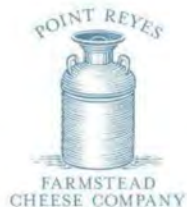


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This spring, AMBASSADORS ANDREW WEIR AND NICHOLAS POLLACCHI visited San Francisco as part of the Rare Craft Roadshow, *The Balvenie's* tour in search of artisans across America. Here, they discovered Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company, owned by the Giacomini family whose farming traditions date back 100 years to Italy. Jill Giacomini Basch, the third generation to work in the family business, shares their story.



CRAFTSMEN FEATURE: *Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese*

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FIRST



Italian-ish

Growing up with cannoli, meatballs, and nostalgia

AS A KID ON LONG Island, New York, I had some Italian-American friends who spoke their parents' dialects, and others who spent summers at Villa Roma, an upstate resort, playing bocce ball and falling in love with guys from Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. "We're not that Italian," my mother would say when I asked why we couldn't go. But we certainly acted that Italian. Every dish my mother cooked seemed to stem from my grandparents' Calabrese and Sicilian roots, whether it was broccoli simmered until sweet in tomato sauce, or baked ziti bound with "re-gut," aka ricotta. On weekends, our extended clan (pictured circa 1984; that's me in the black and white stripes) would gather for meals that started at 3:00 P.M. with antipasti and finished around 5:00 when the salad plates were cleared. Later, friends would drop by for "coffee and cake," a ritual that meant cannoli and cookies, slices of fresh fennel, fruit, and sambuca.

It dawned on me gradually that my mother had learned to downplay her ethnicity from the time she was young for the same reason lots of immigrants' kids do: She wanted to—needed to—emphasize her American-ness, not her Italian-ness; to bring peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to school for lunch, not her

father's sautéed dandelion greens on leftover Italian bread. At our house, she didn't cook her parents' outwardly ethnic stewed tripe or rabbit, but crowd-pleasers like eggplant parmesan and spaghetti with meatballs that had crossed over into the mainstream.

By the time I started writing about restaurants in the 1990s, those delicious dishes had largely been relegated to old school red sauce joints. The zeitgeist had moved to "authentic" Italian—Genoese pesto, Bolognese ragù, dishes I loved but that couldn't be farther from my heritage. Then in 2004, a stylish little place called Frankies Spuntino opened in my neighborhood in Brooklyn. The classically trained chefs, Frank Castronovo and Frank Falcinelli, served fresh pasta and colorful antipasti that reminded me of meals I'd enjoyed in Italy. But they also served exemplary meatballs and escarole soup, even rabbit; dishes that had long been the pride of Italian-American home cooks.

Since then, lots of other chefs and cooks have been reclaiming their Italian-American roots. That's what the story starting on page 53 is all about: a celebration of one of this country's most delicious homegrown cuisines, and of a culture that has retained its identity through food. —DANA BOWEN, Executive Editor

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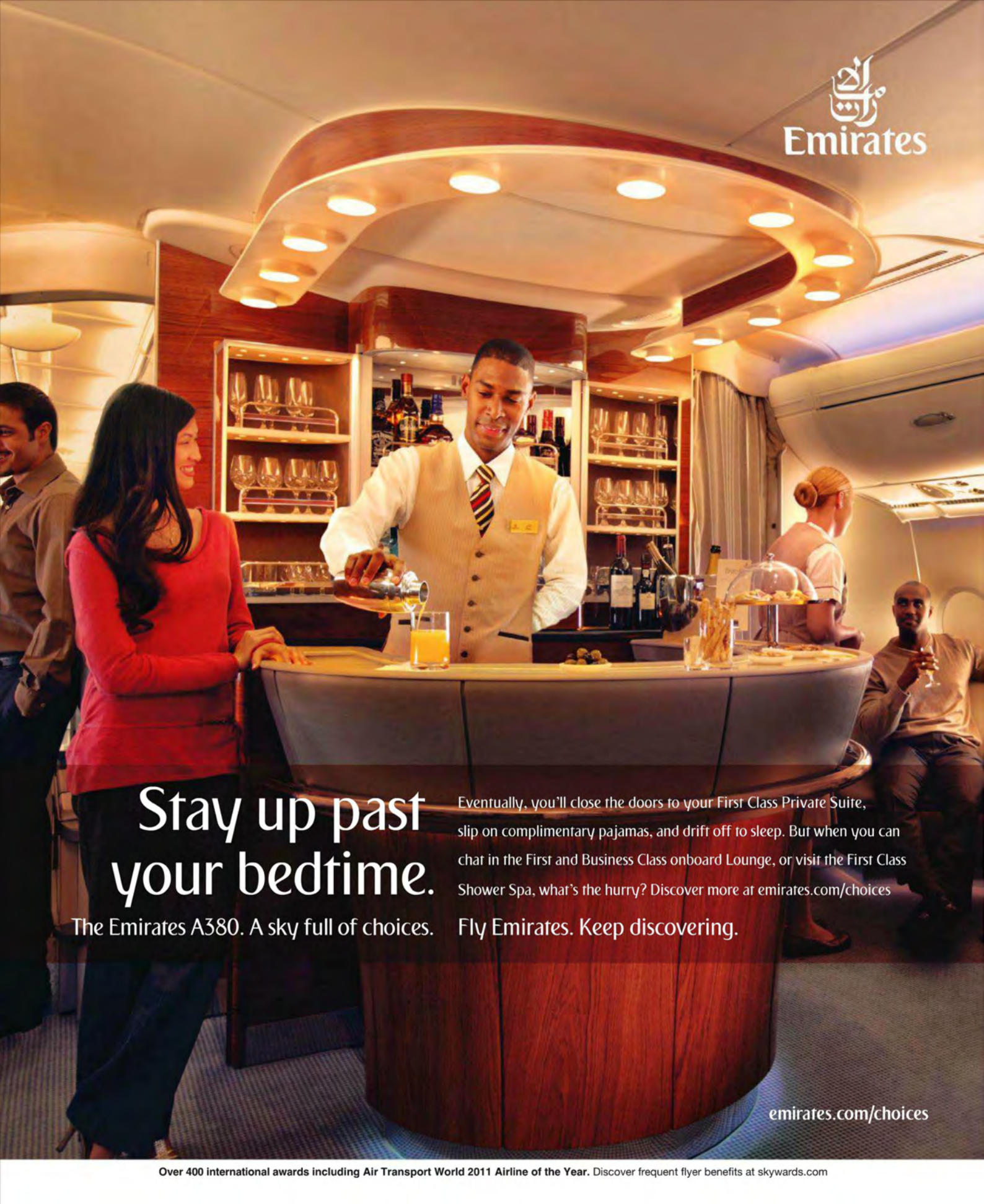
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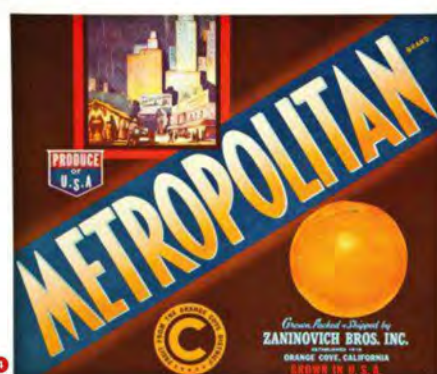
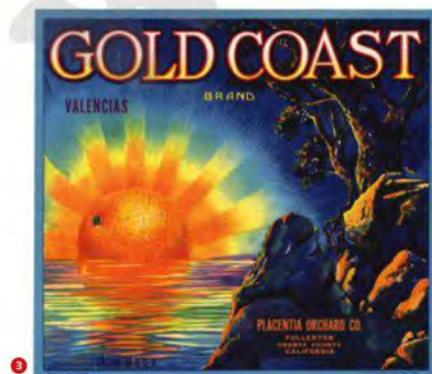
FARE

Comforts and Cravings From the World of Food, Plus Agenda and More



Winter Color

Starting in the 1880s, thousands of vivid mini-posters advertised the citrus that was transported in wooden crates across the U.S. Labels like the 1930s "Santa" (shown, left) were used by farms and cooperatives like Sunkist to promote the winter gift of California (and, to a lesser extent, Florida) sunshine to buyers shivering in chillier climes. The 1950s brought preprinted cardboard boxes, however, and the growth of supermarkets spurred bulk buying, diminishing the need to distinguish small brands. Today, these collector's items bespeak the evolution of American food advertising. —Clarissa Hyman



1 La Reina, 1920s Early labels aimed to intrigue wholesale buyers with exotic Western iconography: Indians, palm groves, and images like this *señorita* that referenced California's Spanish colonial period, when the orange was brought from Mexico.

2 Have One, 1930s Following World War I, with the growth of competition, advertisers turned to images with general appeal. Labels were aimed at grabbing buyers' eyes from a distance with suggestive names and direct illustrations of the crates' contents.

3 Gold Coast, 1930s Though sunny scenes never faded entirely, product identification gained importance. As Gordon T. McClelland and Jay T. Last note in *California Orange Box Labels* (Hillcrest Press, 1985), creative use of the fruit's likeness helped distinguish brands.

4 Metropolitan, 1940s Urban life influenced labels, as did other commercial arts, including film. Block lettering proliferated, as in this label by artist Dario de Julio, who also designed movie titles. The prominent U.S.A. shield reflects post-World War II patriotism as well as the growth of overseas markets.

7

OH BEJ! OH BEJ! FAIR

Sant'Ambrogio Piazza, Milan, Italy
On Sant'Ambrogio Day in 1510, a gift-bearing emissary of the Pope was sent to Milan to reawaken the citizenry's flagging faith. Upon receiving the trinkets the man brought them, children exclaimed, "Oh bej! Oh bej!"—"How beautiful! How beautiful!" in the local dialect—and, ever since, the annual festival celebrating Milan's patron saint has been called by this cry. Souvenirs are sold from stalls on the piazza and food vendors hawk seasonal treats, such as *necci*—crepes made from chestnut flour—and hot *vino cotto*, a mulled wine. Observers attend mass in the spectacular Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio. Information: visita.milano.it

7-17

SAILANA FOOD FESTIVAL

Shekhawati, Rajasthan, India
The central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh is home to the 280-year-old principality of the Maharajas of Sailana, who have long been famed for their culinary prowess. The current Maharaja, His Highness Vikram Singh Ji of Sailana, celebrates the regal cuisine of his ancestors with dishes culled from his father's 1983 book, *Cooking Delights of the Maharajas*. During this annual festival held in the northwest in Rajasthan, guests feast on delicacies like *reshmi biryani*, rice cooked with mutton, chilies, ginger, and saffron; *machchi* kebabs of fish, mustard oil, and mint; and rose water-perfumed desserts. Tickets include a stay at the Sailanas' Surajgarh Fort. Information: royalhouseofsailana.com

10

Anniversary:

CESAR CHAVEZ JAILED OVER LETTUCE BOYCOTT

1970, Salinas, California
In August of 1970, labor leader Cesar Chavez organized the so-called Salad Bowl Strikes, a series of actions including a nationwide boycott against lettuce growers in California's Salinas Valley, who were resisting organizing efforts by his union, the United Farm Workers (UFW). On December 10, he was arrested after refusing to call off the boycott. Chavez was released on Christmas Eve after the California State Supreme Court ruled that the boycott was legal under the First Amendment. The actions led to the ratification of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of »



Heavenly Hash

Fancy resort treatment for a dish of humble origins

THIS IS LIKE a banquet at Hogwarts," my 11-year-old daughter said, invoking Harry Potter's school meals as we stared at the grand breakfast buffet during our visit this past summer to The Greenbrier, an elegant 233-year-old resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Her gaze lingered over cinnamon buns and stacks of biscuits for smothering in sausage gravy. But the dish that I hungered for was the resort's à la carte version of that breakfast classic, corned beef hash.

Devised as a palatable way of using leftover meat, hash got its name in the 17th century from the French word *bacher*, meaning to chop. But though the fried, chopped meat dish lent its moniker to down-market restaurants called "hash houses" in the 1800s, it's been enjoyed by diners across class lines since Samuel Pepys first mentioned eating a rabbit version in his 1663 *Diary*.



Breakfast at The Greenbrier resort in West Virginia, circa 1950

Hash made with corned beef, in particular, was a breakfast staple of affluent colonial households and a feature of menus at grand hotels like The Greenbrier, where its presentation is ever evolving. When we visited last summer, it was served in patties alongside fried potatoes and asparagus tips. Lately, the cooks have topped it with poached eggs and chive-strewn hollandaise, served with elegant toast points. But the recipe for the hash itself remains deliciously consistent, combining diced peppers, onions, and pota-

Seared on the griddle, the faintly peppery hash is soft beneath its decadent crust

atoes, chicken stock, and sizzled shreds of corned brisket. Seared on the griddle, the faintly peppery hash is soft beneath its decadent crust (see a recipe at right). I ate mine with a dab of ketchup, after which the waiter brought me a finger bowl of warm lemon water and a fresh linen napkin. My breakfast of "leftovers" could not have felt more elegant. —Adam Platt



Corned Beef Hash

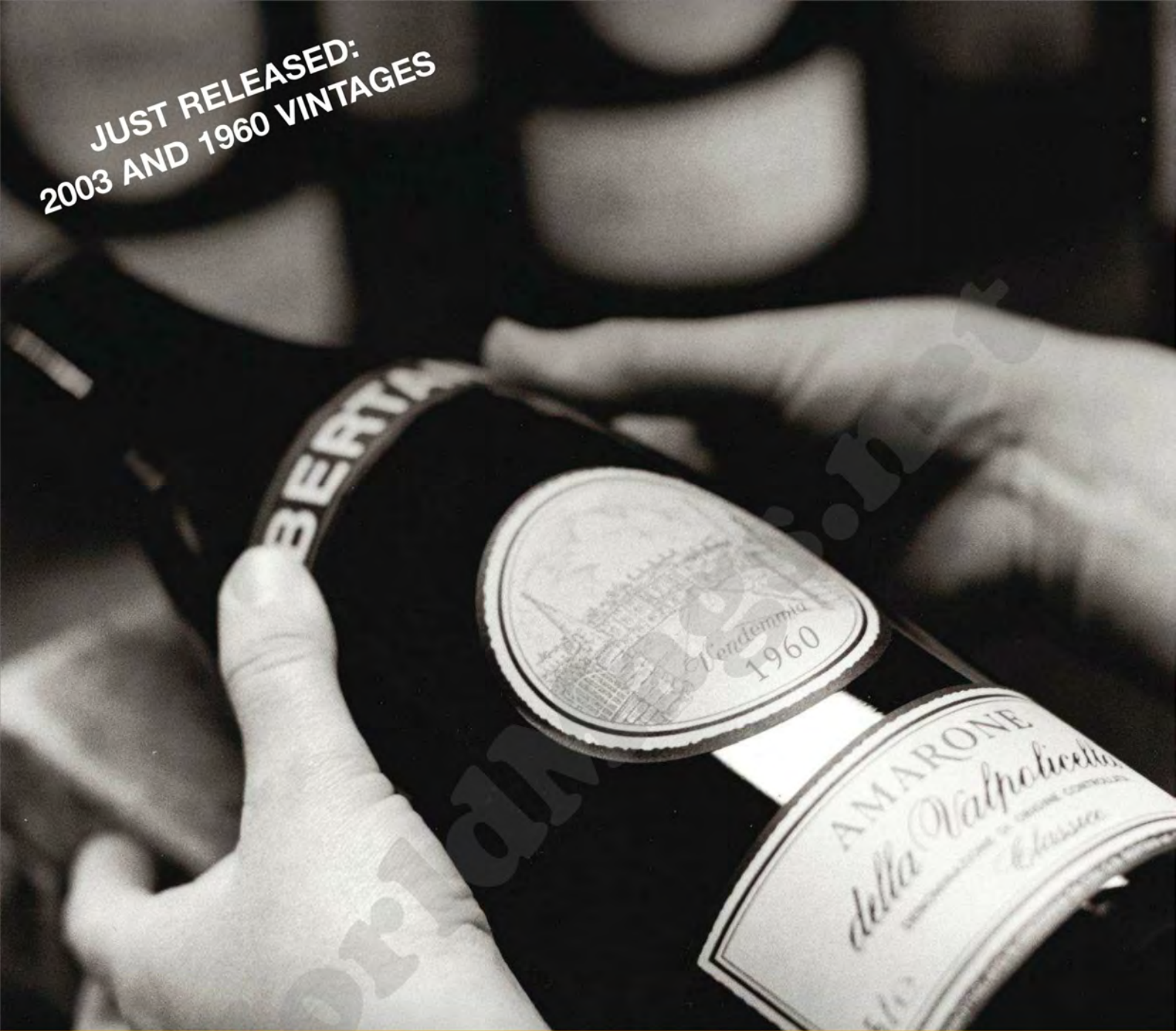
SERVES 6

This iteration of the classic breakfast hash is served at The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. It's elegant topped with poached eggs, hollandaise, and chopped chives, and served alongside toast points.

- 2 cups roughly chopped boiled red-skinned potatoes
- 2 cups finely chopped cooked corned beef
- ¼ cup chicken stock
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp. whole-grain mustard
- ¼ tsp. dried thyme
- 1 small yellow onion, grated
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter

Mash half of the potatoes with a fork in a large bowl until smooth; add the remaining potatoes and the corned beef, stock, parsley, mustard, thyme, onion, garlic, nutmeg, and pepper, and mix until evenly combined. Heat the butter in a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the corned beef mixture, and cook, stirring constantly, until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Using a spatula, press the corned beef mixture into a flat cake, and cook until the mixture is browned and crusty on the bottom, about 10 minutes. Flip the cake, and continue cooking until the mixture is browned and crusty on other side, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a serving plate and cut hash into wedges to serve.

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Street of Dreams

Tokyo's Kitchen Town is cookware nirvana

ANYONE WHO likes to cook might be drawn to kitchenware stores gleaming with copper

and stainless steel. I seek out such shops when traveling. On some trips, I've packed bags so full of new pots and tools that they've exceeded the airlines' weight limit. So imagine my temptation when I found a street dedicated to some of the most striking, varied kitchenware I'd ever seen. I was in Tokyo, researching my cookbook, *In at*

The Deep End: Cooking Fish Venice to Tokyo (Lyons Press, 2011), when I came upon downtown's Kappabashi-Dori, or Kitchen Town, a strip of more than 100 shops packed with grills, bento boxes, pans, and steamers, in an array of colors and materials. Bliss. I made several visits. One way I got a handle on the dazzling abundance was

to take photos for a series of collages, one of which is shown here. The other was to buy things. The gold-colored ladle and the aluminum pan with a mosaic-like pattern that I picked up now hang in my London kitchen. They're immensely useful when I'm making a broth. And they're always stunning to look at. —*Jake Tilson*



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From top: Black Pepper Tofu and Stuffed Bell Peppers in Tomato Sauce (see page 22 for recipes).

Readable Feast

Some of our favorite recipe books of 2011

Cooking Without Borders

Anita Lo and Charlotte Druckman (*Stewart, Tabori & Chang*, \$35) There are chefs' cookbooks so lofty you could get a nosebleed, and those so dumbed-down that the food bears little resemblance to what you'd find in their restaurants. This book from Anita Lo, chef-owner of Manhattan's Asian-inspired Annisa, transcends both categories. It is uncompromising, inspiring, and great to cook from. With sun-drenched photographs by Lucy Schaeffer, *Cooking Without Borders* doesn't claim to be the

Annisa Cookbook, though signature dishes, like foie gras soup dumplings, are included. Rather, it offers a view into Lo's cooking life and influences: her Malaysian-Chinese mother's food and her family's travels; her training under chefs such as Guy Savoy; her gardening and fishing. In the process, it draws a map of Lo's polyglot palate, reflected in dishes like wasabi-laced vichyssoise, and poppy-seed bread pudding with Meyer lemon. Some cooks might balk at the latter recipe, which, in place of a cooking time simply advises to "bake until browned and set." But I can attest that the result was scrumptious, with minimal fuss. —Beth Kracklauer

The Food of Spain Claudia Roden (*Ecco*, \$39.99) I've never

associated Claudia Roden, the author of the incomparable *Book of Middle Eastern Food* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), with Spanish cooking. But a casual perusal through her new book on the subject turned into hours of reading, followed by many happy days in the kitchen. Through *The Food of Spain*, I began to understand Spanish cuisine in the way that Roden has helped me understand Middle Eastern Cooking: viscerally and texturally. I learned how eggs add not only voluptuousness, but also flavor and substance to Spanish classics like vegetables with tomato and hard-boiled egg vinaigrette; how elemental ingredients, like salt cod and onions, can be elevated to stunning heights. A dish of stuffed peppers couldn't be simpler (see page 22

for a recipe), with not much more than olive oil, rice, oregano, and saffron. But it tastes deliciously of the Spanish countryside in summer, and it's a testament to how the proper application of heat (in this case, roasting, as compared to stewing or braising) makes all the difference. Alongside the recipes and Jason Lowe's splendid photographs are chapters dedicated to the historical, regional, and daily contexts of Spanish food, not to mention its Moorish and Jewish influences. In that connection, and in its depth, breadth, and beauty, *The Food of Spain* is clearly the next step in this acclaimed author's beautiful body of work. —James Oseland

Plenty Yotam Ottolenghi (*Chronicle Books*, \$35) Before I cooked from this book, I lusted over its looks: a full-page photo of sautéed arugula with just-set eggs; a close-up of lima beans, fried and tossed with feta and sorrel, topped with enough sumac to set my mouth watering. This is food porn of the highest order; I wanted to cook and eat it all. Once I got into the kitchen with *Plenty*, I understood why Ottolenghi, who owns five London eateries, is famous for his takes on vegetables and grains. The chef, who was born in Israel, draws mostly from Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines, often in the same dish: His saffron pasta with brown butter flavored with ginger, cinnamon, fresh mint, and a half dozen other spices, is a brilliant cultural mash-up. But he's not afraid to range; one of my favorite recipes is a fiery



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» 1975, which gave farm workers the right to collective bargaining.

10 FEAST OF THE SEVEN FISHES FESTIVAL

Fairmont, West Virginia

The Feast of the Seven Fishes, an Italian-American Christmas Eve tradition, is a big deal to citizens of Fairmont, West Virginia, 11 percent of whom claim Italian heritage. Over



4,000 people gather on one block of downtown Fairmont each year to listen to live Italian music, take in cooking demonstrations, and sample foods including *pitta m'pigliata*, a nut- and fruit-filled pastry; lupini beans served with olive oil and cracked pepper; grilled polenta with red sauce and sausages; and, of course, fish: baccala, fried calamari, pasta with anchovies, and more. Information: feastofthesevenfishesfestival.com

16 BIRTHDAY: FRANZ SACHER

1816, Vienna, Austria

Franz Sacher was only 16 when he created his legendary confection, the Sachertorte. When the chef of Prince Klemens Wenzel von Metternich, Austria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, fell ill



before an important dinner, Sacher, a second-year apprentice, was left with the responsibility of impressing the Prince's guests with a new and memorable dessert. The Sachertorte, a chocolate cake layered with apricot jam and enrobed in chocolate glaze, was a success. Its fame spread around the world when Sacher's son, Eduard, opened Hotel Sacher in Vienna in 1876. This decadent dessert is still produced at the hotel according to a secret, 34-step process, the recipe for which is stored in the hotel's vault.

31 LAS UVAS DE NOCHEVIEJA (GRAPES OF NEW YEAR'S EVE)

Throughout Spain

In Madrid's Puerta del Sol and other town squares across Spain, people congregate on New Year's Eve with a dozen grapes in hand. This quirky tradition, started in 1909 by grape growers in the provinces of Alicante and Murcia as a way to sell off a bumper crop, has Spaniards eating one grape per second, for each of the twelve strikes of the bell announcing the new year. It takes practice to finish the grapes before the last bell sounds, but those who do are assured twelve months of good luck in the coming year. Information: spain.info

fried tofu, seasoned with black pepper and scallions (see below for a recipe). His intense approach to flavor made me see ingredients in a new light: I don't often get excited by quinoa, but married with radishes, avocado, fava, lots of cumin and chile flakes, it's hard to resist. —Dana Bowen

The Meatball Shop Cookbook

Daniel Holzman, Michael Chernow, and Lauren Deen (*Balantine Books*, \$28) Greek *keftedes*, Chinese lion's heads, English faggots—nearly every cuisine has its meatballs. Chef Daniel Holzman and manager Michael Chernow capitalized on the food's universality when they opened the Meatball Shop in Manhattan in 2010. Their concept translates seamlessly to this cookbook, which offers variations from classic beef to a Thai-inflected version made with pork and shrimp. The majority of the recipes call for fewer than 10 ingredients, and many are staples that most cooks have on hand. On top of easy execution, the authors add wit, evident in dishes like the Bambi Balls, made with ground venison, juniper berries, and port. But, despite multicultural nods, *The Meatball Shop Cookbook* owes its largest debt to Italy and Italian America; many of its recipes are updates of those cuisines. Pesto is grounded with earthy spinach, risotto gets a hit of fennel, while vegetables like beets with almonds, pecorino, and watercress add elegant dimension to the book. —Ben Mims

The PDT Cocktail Book

Jim Meehan (*Sterling Epicure*; \$24.95) Jim Meehan, the co-owner of PDT, a latter-day Manhattan speakeasy serving superb tipples, spills his secrets to creating perfect drinks, and the perfect drinking environment, in this book, jauntily illustrated by Chris Gall. Meehan doesn't entirely demystify mixology—he calls for a breathtaking range of esoteric ingredients; I had to hunt down lemongrass and cinchona bark just

to make a gin and tonic—but the results are giddily delicious. My first lesson: Go for balance. Meehan adds orange juice to an Aperol Spritz of seltzer, prosecco, and the namesake Italian bitter, bringing fruity equilibrium to this classic refresher. I also learned that small gestures count: A pinch of salt coaxes sweetness from the Edgewood, a mix of gin, grapefruit, Punt e Mes vermouth, and Lillet. Its creator, Greg Best, is quoted: "I had been bartending for five years and realized I was only standing at the edge of the (proverbial) woods." It's an apt remark for this book. Its first impression is mind-boggling, but its parting gift is a touch of mastery. —Betsy Andrews

Black Pepper Tofu

SERVES 4–6

The recipe for this spicy, fried bean curd comes from *Plenty* (Chronicle Books, 2011) by Yotam Ottolenghi.

- 2 cups canola oil
- 1½ lb. firm tofu, cut into 1" cubes
- ½ cup cornstarch
- 11 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped ginger
- 12 small shallots, thinly sliced
- 12 cloves garlic, crushed
- 8 red serrano chiles, stemmed and thinly sliced
- 5 tbsp. coarsely ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp. kecap manis (sweet soy sauce; see page 106)
- 3 tbsp. light soy sauce
- 4 tsp. dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 16 small scallions, cut into 1½" pieces
- Cooked white rice, for serving

Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Toss tofu and cornstarch in a bowl until evenly coated. Fry tofu until browned all over, about 3 minutes. Drain and set aside; discard oil, and wipe skillet clean. Return skillet to medium heat with butter. Add ginger, shallots, garlic, and chiles; cook until soft, about 15 minutes. Stir in pepper, soy sauces, and sugar. Return tofu to skillet; cook, stirring, until

warmed through, about 2 minutes. Stir in scallions; serve over rice.

Stuffed Bell Peppers in Tomato Sauce

SERVES 6

For this dish from Claudia Roden's *The Food of Spain* (Ecco, 2011), use flat-bottomed bell peppers that will stand up easily while baking.

- ¼ cup plus 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 red serrano chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 2 lb. ripe tomatoes, cored and pureed in a food processor, plus 3 finely chopped
- 2½ tsp. sugar
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 2 tsp. finely chopped oregano
- 1¼ cups short-grain rice
- 2½ cups vegetable stock
- Pinch of saffron threads
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 red or green bell peppers

1 Make the tomato sauce: Heat 3 tbsp. oil, garlic, and chile in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add pureed tomatoes, 2 tsp. sugar, and salt; cook until sauce is thickened, about 40 minutes. Set aside.

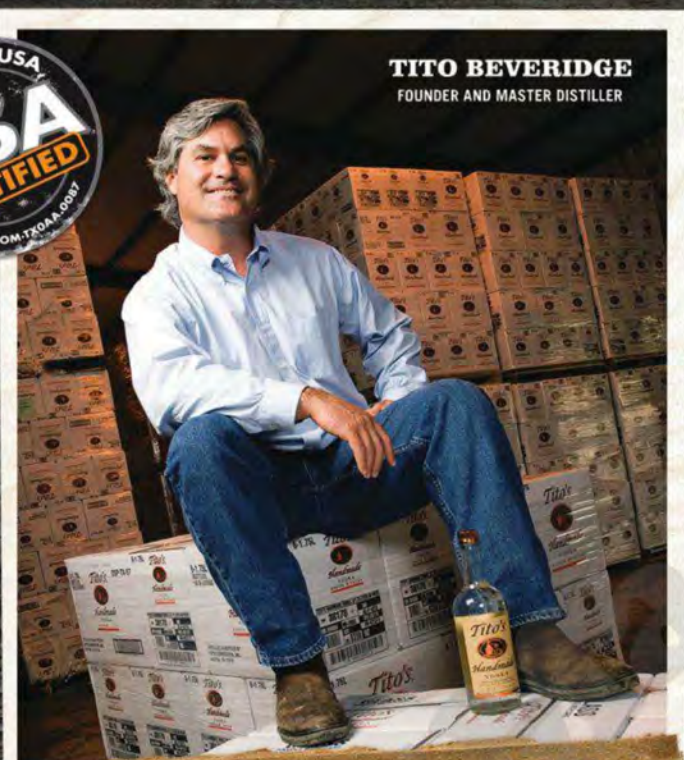
2 Make the filling: Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add onion; cook until soft, about 10 minutes. Add chopped tomatoes, remaining sugar, and oregano; cook until liquid is evaporated, about 10 minutes. Add stock, rice, and saffron; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until rice is slightly underdone, about 15 minutes. Set aside.

3 Heat oven to 400°. Using a paring knife, cut a circle around top of each pepper, discard seeds, and reserve tops. Stand peppers up in a 2-qt. baking dish. Divide filling among peppers; cover with pepper tops. Pour sauce into dish around peppers; cover with foil. Bake for 1 hour; uncover and continue baking until peppers are soft and browned on top, about 15 minutes more.

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On the Web

'Tis the Season

REGARDLESS OF WHAT your holiday tradition is, there's one thing everyone can agree on: the cookies. Whether they're crispy, Italian cornmeal cookies; melt-in-your mouth orange meringues filled with sweet white chocolate; or classic iced gingerbread men, making, sharing, and eating cookies is one of our favorite parts of the season. In celebration of these individual bites of holiday sweetness, we're hosting a Cookie Advent Calendar at SAVEUR.COM: Starting on December 1, we'll be spotlighting a different cookie recipe each day through Christmas. Some are old classics, others are new twists, but all of them are a warm expression of the holiday spirit. Among the ones we'll be giving as gifts this year are Swiss raspberry sandwich cookies, or *spitzbuebe* (shown, above). These shortbread rounds, filled with rich, reduced fruit preserves, live up to their name, which means "bad boys" in Swiss; they're dangerously addictive. For this recipe—and 24 more—visit SAVEUR.COM/COOKIES.

Grown-up Grapes

California wine country comes of age with fine brandy

WHERE THERE ARE grapes, there is brandy; a grape-based, barrel-aged spirit makes good use of unripe or surplus fruit. California had a fine brandy industry in the mid-1800s, but after Prohibition, artisanal spirits were ditched in favor of industrially produced, low-quality ones. So, recently, when I tasted **Germain-Robin Coast Road Reserve California Brandy (\$65)**, I was surprised by its exquisite chestnut color, its scents of guava and apples, its savory sandalwood kick. Fine California brandy, it seems, is again a reality.

The Ukiah-based distillery Germain-Robin was co-founded in 1981 by Hubert Germain-Robin, a native of Cognac who adapted to his new Mendocino home by trading out the usual white French brandy grapes—ugni blanc, colombard—for riper, more refined California-grown pinot noir. If pinot noir lacks the acidity of the other grapes, it can contribute plush berry-like flavors.

Germain-Robin started a small trend. In the early 1990s, distiller Dan Farber and Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard winemaker Jeff Emery launched **Oso-cal Rare Alambic Brandy (\$45)**, made primarily from pinot noir, colombard, and semillon, is

rambunctious, with savory bouillon accents. It screams to be put in a citrusy sidecar cocktail.

The most extraordinary California brandy comes from the esteemed Carneros pinot noir producer Etude, whose oldest barrels, dating to 1982, were inherited when the winery bought its estate. The property once housed brandy maker Rémy Martin's short-lived California distillery, one of a few French forays into the state in the 1970s and '80s. A onetime release, blended from 43 of the 72 remaining barrels, **Etude XO Alambic (\$145)** is packed with flavors of roses, golden raisin, nectarine, and the sherry-like signature of its rarest French counterparts. Made from a mix of grapes both traditional (colombard, ugni blanc) and unconventional (pinot noir, muscat), it's a bridge between two worlds. And it's proof that California can produce brandies as world-class as its wines. —Jon Bonné

THE PANTRY, page 106: Info on visiting The Greenbrier, buying citrus crate labels, and more.



VIVA ITALIA! Soulful minestrone soup, seasonal pastas, luscious *panna cotta*—it's no wonder we love Italian cooking so much. We have to admit, one of our favorite things about this delicious cuisine is how joyfully simple it is to prepare. So, for our first digital book, we bring you *Easy Italian: 30 Classic Recipes*. These dishes yield deeply flavorful results using simple methods and items you likely have on hand. The eBook includes guides to ingredients and wine, step-by-steps, and more. If you're like us, you'll find yourself turning to these recipes time and again—which makes it a terrific bargain at only \$2.99; available mid-December on the iBookstore.



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SOURCE



Almond Joy

An heirloom nut from Sicily brings on the flavor

BY GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

A FEW YEARS AGO, A friend sent me a bag of almonds without any explanation beyond, “You must try these.” I’ve eaten my share of the nuts, but these looked special: tawny, with an especially broad, flat shape. I tore open the bag, which was plain apart from a sticker bearing the name of the producer, *Mastri di San Basilio*, and popped one in my mouth. The husk was smooth and dry, and the flesh, moist and tender. First, I tasted hints of milk, but by the time I was done chewing, the flavor had expanded into a strong essence of marzipan. I’d always wondered at the taste of almond extract, as none of the nuts I’d tried possessed those distinctive floral, bittersweet notes. Yet here was an almond that really measured up.

I tracked down Francesco Padova, who, along with his brother, Salvatore, and his sister, Maria Angela, owns San Basilio, a 180-acre farm in southern Sicily, near the Mediterranean Sea. There, his family has been cultivating pizzuta di Avola, an heirloom variety of almond, for four generations. The hardy breed was championed by the 19th-century botanist Giuseppe Bianca to promote an alterna-

tive to wine growing in Sicily, where insects had been wiping out vineyards. Francesco credits the nuts’ high oil content, as well as the area’s calcium-rich soil, for their unique taste. In this sultry part of Italy, the nearly constant sunshine concentrates the nuts’ flavor, while the seaside humidity provides enough moisture to offset the need for irrigation. Though less water translates to a lower yield, says Francesco, it also means more intense flavor.

Over the years, these almonds have stood out as some of the most elegant snacks I have eaten, and with the holidays upon us, my thoughts turn to them. They make an ideal gift, a fine thing to nibble on with wine and cheese, and a decadent addition to baked goods—they impart an unforgettable aroma to biscotti, and can be ground into flour for a fragrant sponge cake. But more than anything, I like to eat them out of hand, to fully savor their richness and delicate perfume. A 7.5-ounce box of Mastri di San Basilio pizzuta di Avola almonds costs \$25, plus shipping. Visit zingermans.com. 🐾

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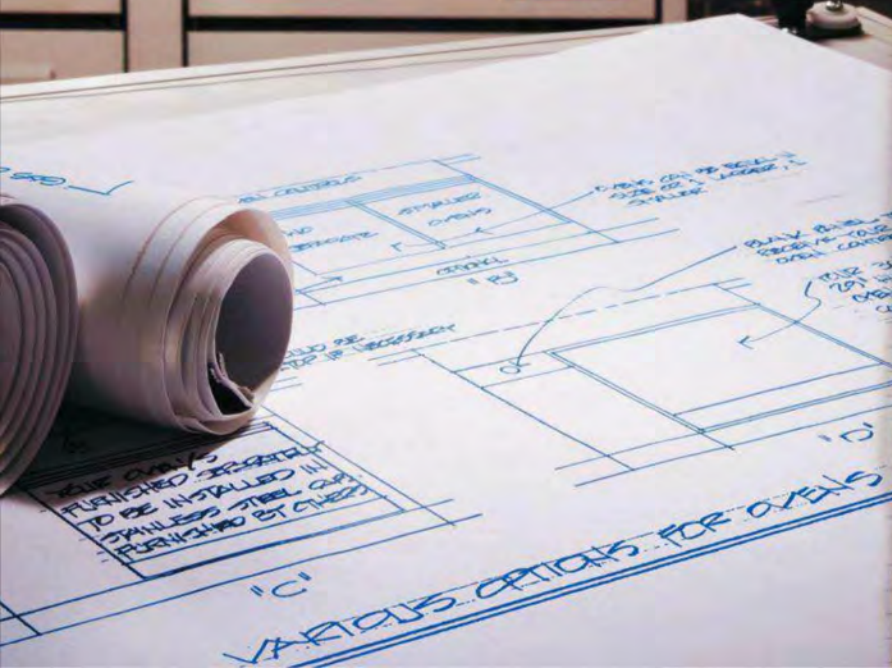
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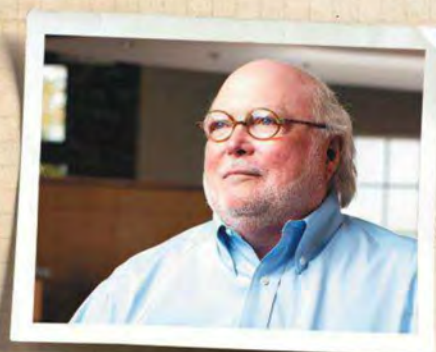
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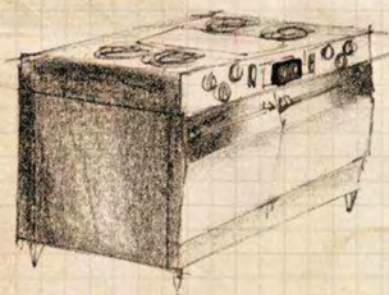
In 1982, Fred Carl started looking for a manufacturing partner with the highest standards. Five years later he found himself.



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Pictured left: the original Viking range - the world's first professional range for the home - and Fred's original drawings.

CELLAR

Why We Love Argentine Wine

Seven new reasons to sample the fruits of this South American country's vines

BY DAVID ROSENGARTEN

Argentina ranges from the Andes to the Atlantic, from the subtropical north to the sub-Arctic south. Within its vast geography, as mid-19th-century European immigrants discovered, there are great places to grow grapes. But it wasn't until 2002, when producers began exporting in earnest, that the rest of us got to taste what Argentines had been drinking all along. Argentina now sends nearly 7 million cases of wine to the U.S. yearly, most of it just one varietal: malbec. Big, dark, and often affordable, malbec has appealed to wine drinkers used to rich California reds. In recent years, though, tastes have changed, and Argentine vintners are responding with new ways of making their wines. Here are seven categories of Argentine wine that you'll want to taste now.

① The New Malbec

When Michel Aimé Pouget brought the malbec grape from Cahors to Argentina in 1853, winegrowers found that the *terroir* there could also yield burly reds. Today, as tastes for high alcohol and tannins in wine diminish, Argentines are styling malbec in a more elegant, food-friendly fashion. A good strategy for finding softer, prettier malbecs is to seek out recent vintages. Most malbec is grown in Mendoza, Argenti-

na's top wine-producing region, located in the central west, where last year's cold snaps slowed grapes' ripening, resulting in even, vivid wines that are delicious to drink now. The Recuerdo Malbec 2010 (\$22) mixes zesty spice with flamboyant fruit, while Yauquen Malbec 2010 (\$12) offers cherry, mineral, and sandalwood notes. Even in the 2009 and 2008 vintages, you can see more gentleness. Susana Balbo Signature Malbec 2008 (\$25) delivers earth and

funk and balanced acid. The bouquet on the Finca Altamira 2009 (\$120) from the acclaimed Bodega Achaval Ferrer is lighter and merrier, with a hint of vanilla, while its velvety mouth shows plums, spice, and a long, powerful finish.

② Bonarda

Malbec might be their big export, but bonarda is what Argentines drink at home. Not to be confused with the same-named grape from Italy's Piedmont, Argentine bonarda

comes from the Savoie, in eastern France, where it is known as charbonneau. More delicate than malbec, it allows the character of the *terroir* to shine through, picking up notes of farmyard and forest. Medium-bodied and rustic, it's an ideal wine to drink with lighter meats. Bodegas Nieto Senetiner excels at bonarda; their medium-bodied 2009 is full of beaujolais-like berries (\$15), while the 2008 Limited Edition is meaty and suave (\$34). From La Rioja north of Mendoza, the La Puerta Gran Reserva Bonarda 2007 (\$35), with its hints of leather and minerals, proves that the grape can age a bit.

③ Torrontés

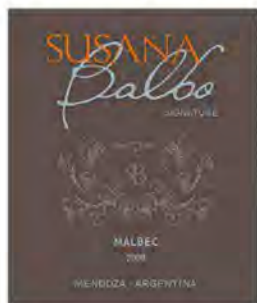
If there's an Argentine

white likely to become as popular as malbec, it's torrontés. A relative of muscat, flowery torrontés displays muscat's characteristic lychee perfume. A decade ago, the wines contained more sugar and more alcohol. Today, winemakers like Nieto Senetiner, whose sweet-tart 2010 torrontés

Above, harvesting malbec grapes at Susana Balbo's vineyard in Mendoza.



(\$12) is almost Riesling-like, are producing fresher, drier, more acidic wines that are perfect as apéritifs. The most famous region for torrontés is Cafayate, in the northwestern province of Salta. Here, torrontés enjoys cool nights, result-



ing in electric wines like the leafy, peachy Trapiche Broquel Torrontes 2010 (\$15). More creamy and buttery, the Argento Torrontés Procedencia Salta 2010 (\$12) still exhibits zip; it's a great wine to sip with spicy or grilled seafood.

④ Patagonian Pinots

Patagonia, at the bottom of South America, is a land of pine forests and icy streams. Its wine-making area is chilly and windy enough to produce lively fruit with zingy acids. This is good news for cold-loving pinot noir, which tends to take on great textural complexity here. Bodega NQN Malma Finca La Papay Pinot Noir 2010 (\$15) beauti-

fully represents pinot's lighter side; its ruby hue and strawberry notes make it like a beaujolais, but with extra depth. A notch up in body is Bodega Chacra's Barda Pinot Noir 2010 (\$20), a shimmering, cherry-tinged wine.

⑤ High-Altitude Wines

Traditionally, Argentine vines were planted

which thickens grape skins, leading to vibrant fruit. Today, a number of fine wineries—Salentein, Finca Sophenia, Aneluna, Zorzal—are clustered around Tupungato, a town named after a nearby peak so tall that its moniker means “star observatory” in the native Huarpe language. Zorzal Climax Malbec 2008 (\$43) shows strains of jam and cassis,

winery may be state-of-the-art, but much of it is dedicated to a label called Trumpeter, which sells for just over \$10 a bottle. Trumpeter Merlot 2010 (\$11) is finely balanced, with a wonderful rhubarb-mulberry nose. The 2010 malbec in Catena's value line, Alamos, sports a mulled-wine richness that manages to finish gracefully. It's a lot of wine for \$13.



Clockwise, from top left: Susana Balbo's Mendoza winery; irrigating Zuccardi's Maipú vineyard; malbec vines in midwinter; Zuccardi's Santa Rosa vineyard. Below: bonardo grapes

on valley floors, where the warmth guaranteed ripening, and the land was easier to farm. But higher altitude brings a greater variation in daytime and nighttime temperatures, which slows ripening, captures acidity, and deepens flavors. The sunlight is also more intense higher up,

ravishing fruit, and a velvety texture. For other sky-high bottles, check the label for the words *Tupungato* or *Uco Valley*, the name of the high Andean area where the town is located.

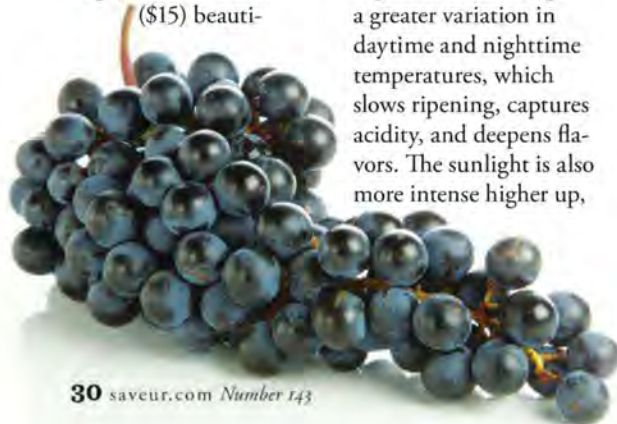
⑥ Value Wines

Argentine wine had long been a good value—until malbec fever pushed some prices past \$100. Now, a new value-consciousness has taken hold. Tupungato's Rutini

⑦ Innovations

There's not only a new approach to the tried-and-true in Argentina; there's also experimentation with grapes better known elsewhere. In neighboring Chile, sauvignon blanc is a winner, so Argentine vintners are trying it, too. Zorzal's 2009 (\$13) is herbal, figgy, and crisp. Even better are efforts with pinot grigio. Argento's 2010 pinot grigio (\$12) is one of the world's most

refreshing. As well, the old grapes are entering into new marriages. Zuccardi's Santa Julia Innovacion, a torrontés-pinot grigio mix (\$10), is flexible for all kinds of foods. Some of the most exciting blends are based on bonarda: framboise-like Tikal Patriota 2009 (60 percent bonarda, 40 percent malbec) at \$20; Susana Balbo's spicy, leathery 2008 Crios (50 percent bonarda, 50 percent syrah) at \$15; and rich, mineral La Posta Cocina Tinto 2009 (20 percent bonarda, 20 percent syrah, 60 percent malbec), also \$15. Finally, there's a playfulness to much of the winemaking in Argentina today. In Tupungato, for instance, the Italian producer Masi makes the ripasso-style Passo Doble (\$14), taking lightly fermented malbec juice and passing it over dried Venetian corvina grapes. The garnet-hued wine has a roasted coffee nose and a sweet, gratifying beginning followed by balance and verve. Masi's spirit catches the current Argentine mood: With all this marvelous fruit to play with, why stick to tradition?



Sometimes, going the extra mile means going to the extra pet store. When a customer at Dulles airport in D.C. brought the wrong sized kennel to ship his dog, British Airways World Cargo Supervisor Richie was ready to serve. Not only did he escort the dog owner to a pet store, he found a second pet store when the first one did not have the right size kennel. It's this type of dedication to service that makes us stand out to our customers, even the four-legged ones. To Fly. To Serve.





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REPORTER



A Slice of Christmas

Tradition and innovation converge in France's festive *bûche de Noël*

BY GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

PARIS AT CHRISTMASTIME is heaven for a cake lover like me. True, a pâtisserie on virtually every street corner is seductive at any time of year, but there's something magical about windows packed with elaborately decorated *bûches de Noël*. Few French people celebrate Christmas without one of these cakes, a sponge roulade filled and iced with buttercream in flavors such as coffee, praline, chocolate, and chestnut. Modeled after the Yule log, the *bûche* is typically decorated with such embellishments as meringue mushrooms, marzipan holly, stumps whorled in a wood grain pattern, and frosting that's scored to resemble bark.

I adore these traditional gâteaux. Yet over the last decade, I've noted a mounting trend: New interpretations of the *bûche de Noël* are proliferating; shapes and decorations have departed from the classic log; textures and flavors have grown markedly lighter, fruitier, and more adventurous. Strolling past the Montmartre pastry shop of Arnaud Delmontel some Christmases ago, I noticed a selection of *bûches* in a range of Technicolor hues: a glossy sea foam-green roulade of pistachio sponge and mousse, with a sour cherry core; another in school bus yellow that was flavored with *yuzu*, the Asian citrus that seems as common as chocolate in

Parisian pastry these days. They were devoid of stumps and meringue mushrooms, yet they were still, clearly, *bûches de Noël*. These whimsical departures made me wonder about the evolution of this iconic cake. Spurred by my curiosity, last winter I contacted Delmontel, who offered to show me how he prepares a *bûche de Noël à la crème au beurre café*, the version he believes is at the root of the tradition.

Christmas is an exceptionally busy time for Delmontel, who owns three pastry shops in Paris. He starts planning his seasonal offer-

A traditional *bûche de Noël* (see page 38 for recipe).

TODD COLEMAN

How to Roll and Decorate a Bûche de Noël For the complete recipe, see page 38



1 Put green meringue in a piping bag fitted with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " star tip. Start with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide star, then pipe two more stars on top of the first, each $\frac{1}{2}$ " smaller than the last, to form a three-tiered Christmas tree. Repeat steps to make additional trees.



2 Put plain meringue in a piping bag fitted with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " round tip. Pipe several $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide mounds and $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " sticks to form mushroom caps and stems. Once the meringue pieces have baked and cooled, fit stems into bottoms of caps.



3 Place hot cake on a large kitchen towel dusted with confectioners' sugar; dust cake with more sugar. Starting with one narrow end, roll cake and towel together into a tight cylinder; let cool completely. Gently unroll cake.



4 Brush rum syrup evenly over the cake with a pastry brush. Using an offset spatula, spread buttercream evenly over the cake, leaving a 1 " border along the top edge so that the roll will close neatly and the buttercream will remain inside.



5 Starting with the edge nearest you, roll the cake, taking care not to apply too much pressure, so the buttercream stays inside the roll. Transfer the cake roll to a serving platter, seam side down, and chill to set.



6 Using a serrated knife, cut 3 " off one end of cake at a 30° angle. Trim other end of cake to make it flat. Remove angled end and spread its flat side with buttercream—this will help it stick to the top of the cake.



7 Position the angled "stump" half-way between the center of the cake and the trimmed end so that it sits securely—frosted, flat side down—on top, to suggest the cut branch of a log.



8 Spread ganache over the surface of the cake and the stump; leave the ends of cake and the top of the stump exposed. Run the tines of a fork along the ganache parallel to the length of cake.

ings in June, developing recipes and creating brochures to showcase his collection. In early December, he displays the cakes in his shops' windows. Closer to the holiday, he sets up a tent outside for those who have preordered. In the two weeks before Christmas, the chef and his team produce close to 2,500 *bûches de Noël*.

The key to making a great *bûche de Noël*, according to Delmontel, a stocky man with a silver ponytail, is mastering the sponge cake, or as it's called in French, *biscuit*: "If it's cooked correctly, the cake is already done." He began by making a meringue, beating it until it was glossy and stiff enough to form a *bec d'oiseau*, or bird's beak, when the whisk was pulled from the bowl. Mixed into the *biscuit* batter, the meringue helped produce a cake that was springy to the touch and flexible enough to roll. For the coffee buttercream, Delmontel mixed more fluffy meringue, coffee extract, and soft

butter until the cream took on a satiny sheen.

Once the cake had baked and cooled, Delmontel brushed on a coffee-flavored syrup, waited a few minutes for it to absorb, and then spread buttercream over the cake from edge to edge. To form the log shape, he rolled the cake and sliced off the ends on the bias, arranging the "stumps" on top of the log. Using a pastry bag, he piped on more buttercream, covering the exterior of the cake. Finally, he warmed a fork in hot water and slashed bark-like markings through the frosting. He cut me a slice, and I took a bite. My mouth filled with bittersweet coffee essence and silky buttercream; the sponge was delicate, yet kept the whole thing grounded. It was simply one of the most delicious cakes I could hope to eat.

THE BÛCHE DE NOËL HAS its roots in Yule, a monthlong celebration of the win-

ter solstice observed by Northern Europe's Germanic tribes. The holiday peaked with the burning of an enormous log whose purpose was to ward off the darkness, both literal and figurative, associated with winter. The burning of the Yule log is one of many pre-Christian rituals incorporated into Christmas celebrations across Europe. But by the late 19th century in France, as smaller stoves replaced large hearths, the tradition had all but faded. Soon enough, the confectionery version of the Yule log emerged to fill the void.

The first recorded mention of the *bûche de Noël* appeared in 1898, in *Le Mémorial Historique et Géographique de la Pâtisserie*, a cookbook by the Parisian pastry chef Pierre Lacam. The recipe's primary elements are identical to those of Delmontel's *bûche de Noël*: *biscuit* rolled with either chocolate or

TODD COLEMAN (8)

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coffee buttercream. According to Michael Krondl, author of *Sweet Invention, A History of Dessert* (Chicago Review Press, 2011), the *bûche de Noël* is an emblem of the era that produced it. With the advent of the railroad and tourism in the 19th century, the Parisian middle class was having a love affair with the countryside. Krondl believes this cake is an urban pastry chef's interpretation of a provincial Yuletide tradition.

Totemic as the Yule log shape may be, in the last decade, on the quest for novelty, many Parisian pâtissiers have abandoned it altogether. Recent examples include the *bûche* created by the celebrated pastry chef Christophe Michalak of the Hotel Plaza Athénée, modeled after the hotel's cascading staircase. At the tea room Angelina, chef Sebastian Bauer created a *bûche* that paid tribute to another iconic sweet, the macaron, by casting a chocolate mold in the shape of three of the cookies lined up in a row. And at the restaurant 114 Faubourg, pastry chef Laurent Jeannin dreamed up a version in the form of a white-chocolate mountain peak.

Innovation among Parisian pastry chefs is nothing new, of course. Back in 1873, Jules Gouffé wrote in *Le Livre de Pâtisserie*: "In order to succeed in the art of pastry, a youth...must have a lively and inventive fancy, one able to originate ideas." When I was in Paris last winter, several pâtissiers I spoke to cited the game-changing influence of the visionary pastry chef Pierre Hermé on the new exhibitionism in the *bûches de Noël*. By creating new fall, winter, spring, and summer lines of pastry each year, much like Paris's couturiers, Hermé solidified the notion of pastry art as fashion, and his peers followed suit. Now, the annual unveiling of *bûches de Noël* by the city's pastry chefs is attended by feverish media buzz. "Every year," said Jeannin, "there's more and more pressure to create for Christmas."

At the same time, even as pastry chefs have pulled out all the stops devising ever more radical renditions of the *bûche de Noël*, it seems there's been a parallel trend, equally radical in its way, among home cooks. Parisians have, historically, left pastry to the pâtissiers, making simple cakes at home but purchasing more elaborate desserts from the



From top: Pastry chef Arnaud Delmontel at his shop in Montmartre, Paris; blogger Pascale Weeks frosts a *bûche de Noël* in her kitchen.

cake shop. In the case of *bûches de Noël*, it's possible to find versions at every price point; even supermarkets sell them, both frozen and fresh, made from cake, ice cream, and sorbet. But there's a new movement toward professional-style baking at home, spurred in part by the recent abundance of books geared toward home cooks by masters such as Hermé and Michalak.

Pascale Weeks, a French food blogger, makes *bûche de Noël* for her family. "Ten years ago it was unusual to make your own," Weeks told me when at her house in Nogent Sur Marne, a suburb of Paris. "Now more people do; it's easy to buy all the utensils to make them at home." The day I visited, she had made a chestnut *bûche de Noël*. Her *biscuit* was pliant, without a single crack, and she had set a couple of slices at an angle to form the customary stumps. On top of the log swathed in chestnut buttercream, she lined up three *marrons glacés* (candied chestnuts) and then sprinkled on balls of edible silver "frost." It was as enchanting—and delicious—as any *bûche de Noël* I ate that winter.

EVERY DAY CAN BE A HOLIDAY

French Cream Martini

2 oz. Tres Leches
1.5 oz. Fine French Vodka

*Mix with ice, strain
into a martini glass**

Coconut Cream Pie

1.5 oz. Tres Leches
1.5 oz. Coconut Rum

Serve on crushed ice

Vaca Negra "Black Cow"

Equal parts Tres Leches & Coffee
Tequila or Espresso Vodka

*Chill & layer in a
shot glass*

Brandy Alejandro

2 oz. Tres Leches
1 oz. Fine Brandy

*Combine & serve over ice
cream or crushed ice*



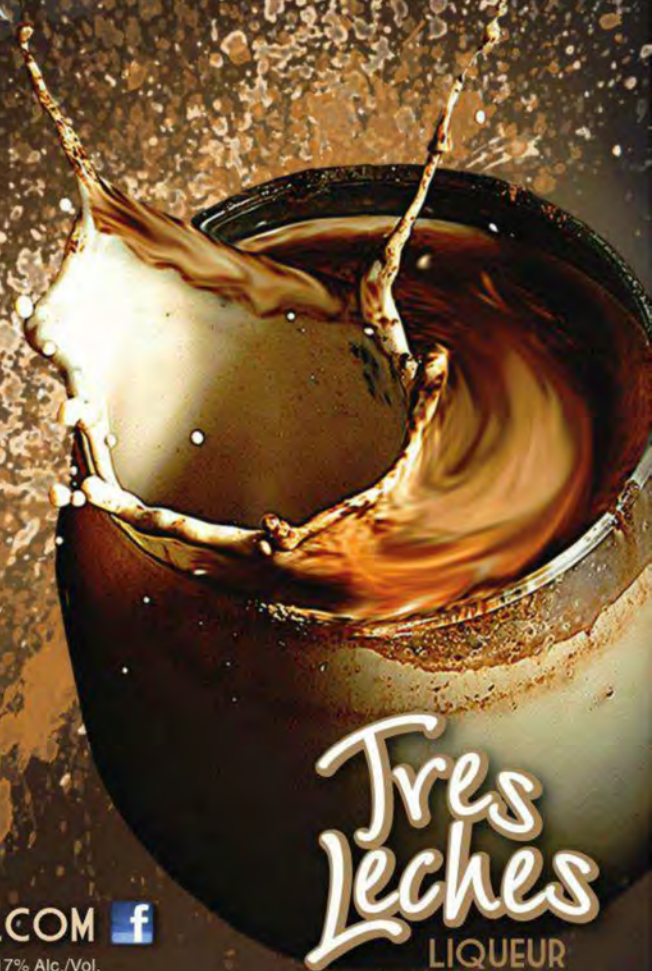
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Cranberry Apple Pie

Cooking the berries, sugar and orange peel with flour before you pour it over the apples gives the pie a better texture and flavor. Chopped pecans add a nice crunch. This tasty combination is perfectly matched with the healthy whole grains in the crust.

PIE CRUST

2 cups (8 1/2 ounces) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1 cup (4 ounces) King Arthur Unbleached White Whole Wheat Flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons sugar (optional)
1/2 cup (3 1/4 ounces) vegetable shortening
1/2 cup (4 ounces) cold butter
6 to 9 tablespoons (3 to 4 1/2 ounces) ice water

In a large bowl, whisk together the flours, salt and sugar if using. With a pastry blender, two knives, or your fingertips, cut the shortening into the flour mixture until it resembles cornmeal. Dice the butter into cubes and cut in until the largest pieces are the size of a dime. Sprinkle the ice water over the flour/fat mixture, tossing with a fork, using 2 tablespoons at a time. Continue until the dough is just moist enough to hold together. Gather it into a ball, cut it in half and flatten the halves into two disks. Wrap the pieces of dough and refrigerate to give them a rest for 30 minutes or more before rolling them out.

PIE FILLING

1 1/2 cups (5 1/4 ounces) chopped cranberries
1 cup (7 ounces) sugar
1/2 teaspoon grated orange peel (zest)
1 tablespoon King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1/3 cup (2 5/8 ounces) orange or cranberry juice
6 tablespoons (1 1/2 ounces) chopped pecans
3 firm, tart apples, peeled, cored and sliced
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon butter

Preheat your oven to 425°F. Lightly grease a 9-inch pie plate, and line with half the pie dough from above. Refrigerate the crust while you make the filling. In a medium saucepan, cook the cranberries with the sugar, orange peel, flour and juice until the mixture is slightly thickened; remove from heat and cool. Sprinkle half the pecans in the bottom of the prepared pie plate. Make 2 layers of apples on top of the nuts. Sprinkle these with cinnamon and dot with butter. Pour the cooled cranberry mixture over the apples and sprinkle on the remaining pecans. Cover with a latticed top. Bake for 30 minutes or until the crust is golden and the berries are bubbling. Remove from the oven and cool before slicing.

Yield: 1 pie, 8 slices

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Bûche de Noël

(Yule Log Cake with Coffee Buttercream and Ganache)

SERVES 10-12

This version of the traditional French Christmas cake (pictured on page 33) is filled with coffee buttercream and covered in chocolate ganache. For illustrated step-by-step instructions on how to roll and decorate a *bûche de Noël*, see page 34.

FOR THE GANACHE AND MERINGUE DECORATIONS:

14 oz. 70 percent dark chocolate, finely chopped
1 cup heavy cream
2 tbsp. honey
1/2 cup sugar
2 egg whites
2 tsp. green food coloring

FOR THE COFFEE BUTTERCREAM AND RUM SYRUP:

1 cup, plus 2 tbsp. sugar
4 egg whites
24 tbsp. (3 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
1 tbsp. strongly brewed espresso
1 tbsp. dark rum

FOR THE SPONGE CAKE:

5 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted and cooled, plus more for pan
3/4 cup cake flour, plus more for pan
3/2 cup sugar
4 eggs
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting
Cocoa powder, for dusting
Edible gold dust, to garnish (see page 106)

1 Make the ganache: Place chocolate in a bowl; set aside. Bring cream and honey to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; pour over chocolate and let sit for 1 minute. Using a rubber spatula, slowly stir cream and chocolate until smooth and shiny; let cool at room temperature until set and thick, at least 6 hours or overnight.

2 Make the meringue decorations: Heat oven to 200°. Place sugar and egg whites in a bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water; stir mixture until egg whites register 140° on an instant-read thermometer. Remove bowl from saucepan and beat with a hand mixer on high speed until cooled. Place 1 cup meringue in a bowl, and stir in food coloring; transfer green meringue to a piping bag fitted with a 3/8" star tip. Working on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, pipe two 1 1/2"-wide stars; pipe a 1"-wide star on top of each larger star, and then pipe a 1/2"-wide star on top of each middle star to form a three-tiered Christmas tree. Transfer uncolored meringue to a piping bag fitted with a 3/8"-round tip; pipe four 1 1/2"-wide mounds

to resemble mushroom caps, and then pipe four 1/2"-wide x 1 1/2"-tall sticks to resemble mushroom stems. Bake meringue shapes until dry and crisp, about 2 hours. Turn off oven and let shapes cool completely in oven.

3 Make the buttercream and syrup: Place 1 cup sugar and egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer and set it over a saucepan of simmering water; stir mixture until egg whites register 140° on an instant-read thermometer. Remove bowl from saucepan and place on stand mixer fitted with a whisk; beat on high speed until meringue is cooled and forms stiff peaks. Replace whisk with paddle and add butter to meringue; beat until smooth, stir in espresso, and set aside. To make the rum syrup, bring remaining sugar, rum, and 1 tbsp. water to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan over high heat; cook until sugar dissolves and set aside to cool.

4 Make the sponge cake: Heat oven to 400°. Grease and flour a 13" x 18" rimmed baking sheet, lined with parchment paper, and set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk, beat sugar and eggs on high speed until mixture falls back in thick ribbons when lifted from the whisk, about 6 minutes; fold in butter and flour. Spread batter into an even layer on bottom of prepared baking sheet and bake until golden brown on the bottom, about 12 minutes. Place a clean kitchen towel that is larger than the baking sheet on a work surface, and dust it liberally with confectioners' sugar. Invert cake onto towel; dust with more sugar. Starting with a narrow end of the rectangle, immediately roll cake up into a jelly roll, letting the towel roll inside the cake. Let cool to room temperature.

5 Once cake is cooled, gently unroll it, remove towel, and brush the inside with the rum syrup; allow to soak in for about 2 minutes. Spread buttercream evenly over cake; reroll cake and set the roll seam side down on a serving platter. Slice off about 3" of one end of the cake roll at a 30° angle; cut the other end to make it flat. Spread the flat end of the angled slice with a little buttercream and set the slice on top of the cake roll to create a "stump." Stir ganache until smooth and, using a small offset spatula, spread ganache over cake, leaving the ends of cake and cut top of the "stump" exposed. Drag the tines of a fork along the ganache, making markings to resemble bark; refrigerate until chilled.

6 Decorate the *bûche de Noël*: Place meringue "caps" on top of "stems" to form mushrooms. Dust cocoa powder lightly over the mushrooms, and sprinkle gold dust lightly over the entire *bûche de Noël*. Place meringue mushrooms and Christmas trees decoratively on and around the *bûche de Noël* before serving.



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Cranberry Apple Pie recipe opposite page

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Larger Than Life

A remembrance of friendship with the late, great James Beard

BY JANE AND MICHAEL STERN

AN OLD SNAPSHOT TAKEN FROM our car's rear seat shows only the back of a head. It is James Beard's. Like the huge stone statues of Easter Island or an image of Buddha himself, the large, bald, freckled cranium is an instantly recognizable icon. In our faded photo, he is sitting uncomfortably in the passenger seat of our well-worn VW Beetle, waiting to drive off with us on some dining adventure.

We met James Beard when he was an old man, already in his late seventies, slowed by ill health and fond of wearing corduroy bedroom slippers and voluminous smocks to accommodate his bulk. It was just after he had championed our first book, *Roadfood* (Random House, 1978), in his syndicated newspaper column. We were young, knew nobody in the food world, and were sassy enough to go against the prevailing winds of nouvelle cuisine by writing a book celebrating square meals in America's diners and quick-eats cafés. Beard, having grown up in Oregon and having traveled plenty, was a huge fan of regional foods and embraced our mission. His kudos helped put us on the map as food writers, and when we called to thank him, he suggested that we meet in person.

Our original visit to his brownstone in Greenwich Village was the first of what became a weekend ritual: an afternoon of chitchat that ended with a trip to a restaurant of his choice. We would squash him into our little car and drive the short distance. Why we never took a cab remains a mystery lost to time.

It would be charming to imagine the great man taking two fledglings under his wing to gracefully guide us into his rarified world. In a sense he did, but there was nothing graceful about it. During our first visit to his home, he asked if we would like a glass of bubbly. Presuming he meant seltzer, we said yes, and were shocked enough at the first sip of champagne that Jane dropped the crystal flute on the kitchen floor, smashing it. To atone for her humiliation, she baked dog biscuits for Beard's pug, Percy. Master offered his dog one of the cookies; dog took a tentative bite and spit it out in disgust. This was especially heartbreaking because dogs were a lively topic of discussion with Beard. He knew we loved our bullmastiffs, Beulah and Edwina, as much as he loved Percy; we

often traded mushy eulogies to the wonders of canine companionship.

We once accompanied Beard to a dinner party at the home of one of his gastronome friends. Utterly terrified by the conversation, we stayed mute unless a question was directed our way. "Where in Connecticut is your source for caul?" asked one famous cookbook writer. Having no idea what caul was (we later looked it up: It's the fatty membrane of a pig's intestines, often used to wrap sausage or pâté), we mumbled something about how our rural town had not only an A&P but also a Stop & Shop. "I see," the snooty broad said with an icy smirk.

Most of our time with Beard was not so trying. One year, just before

Christmas, we spent a delirious afternoon helping him open an endless stream of gifts from seemingly every restaurant, acolyte, publisher, and fan. We would read him the cards, hold up the jams, cookies, wines, and so on, and wait for his thumbs-up or down: "That's nice, put it aside," or "What a piece of crap, throw it away." We took home the rejects, which we happily feasted on long past New Year's.

The meal that crystallized our unusual friendship took place at Lutèce, generally acknowledged at the time to be the best restaurant in America. Knowing that we had never set foot in Lutèce amused Beard, so he called his old friend André Soltner, the chef and proprietor, and told him we were coming to lunch. When we arrived, Soltner rushed over, hugged Beard, and seated

us at a large table in the center of Lutèce's famous garden room. Every customer recognized Beard, and as we began to talk, it was clear the entire restaurant was eavesdropping.

Earlier in life, Beard had been an opera singer, and he still had a voice that carried to the last row. He was also partly deaf, so we had to talk extra loud. As we waited for our meal, Beard sat back in his chair, took a sip of wine, and in his booming basso said, "So, Percy has impacted anal glands; what should I do?"

We don't remember what Soltner cooked for us or much else about that afternoon other than the horrified looks on the faces of our fellow diners as that conversation ensued. But we hold the memory dear. It reminds us that having known this singular, generous, and quirky man, long before his name was attached to the prestigious food industry awards, is one of the joys of our lives. 🐾

JANE and MICHAEL STERN are *SAVEUR* contributing editors and the authors of *The Lexicon of Real American Food* (Lyons Press, 2011).





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ESSAY



A Taste of the Past

A daughter comes to terms with her father through his childhood foods

BY BETSY ANDREWS

MY FATHER IS SOBBING. With calloused fingers, he wipes tears from his eyes, which are two different colors, one green and one brown. He's an emotional guy, given to booze-fueled joie de vivre, blistering anger, and when he's telling half yarns about himself, a sort of megalomaniacal glee. But I have never seen him like this. He says hesitantly, and with a slush to his words, "I wanted so badly for you to be able to write that story."

It is Father's Day at the hospital. The land has been sold. The cottage has been cleaned out. And my father, who thought that his

blood thinners were bothering his stomach, and so stopped taking them, has had his second stroke.

The story he wanted so badly for me to write was a story about him and about his mother's cooking. It's a story about where he comes from.

SOME YEARS AGO, I CAME up with a joke that made my sisters and brother laugh. "Help," I'd say. "Dad is threatening to teach me how to make *haluśky*." It was funny because it was true—and because the dis-

tress was only partially mocking. Anything my father offered to teach us carried with it his dangerous impatience. It carried with it, too, his self aggrandizement. "Tell me," he would have said, "doesn't your daddy make the best *haluśky* ever? Tell me."

The food, though, was the funniest thing in the joke. Four suburban Philadelphia kids with a mother we adored who served us take-out pizza and Chinese food, what did we know from *haluśky*? Boiled, hand-fashioned knobs of flour and potato, *haluśky* came from another world. And so did my father.

He wore ascots and drove Rolls-Royces. He liked flashy restaurants and cocktail lounges. An enthusiastic cook with gourmet aspirations, he made a show of dinner: bouillabaisse followed by lobsters and crabs; sukiyaki cooked on an electric flattop in the center of the dining room table. He taught me how to drink. "Your daddy's a millionaire," he'd boast, raising a tumbler of Crown Royal. He joined the country club. He flew Pan-Am.

But that was not where my father was from. He was born in 1928 in the Pocono Mountains, the second of five brothers, part of a generation of offspring of Eastern European immigrants who came to northeastern Pennsylvania at the turn of the 20th century to work in the anthracite mines. These folks called themselves Coal Crackers.

His father, Andrew Andrews, née Pacusa, was from the former Czechoslovakia. A schoolteacher, he had mined coal when younger. He died of black lung disease when I was a small child. My father's mother, whom we called Grandma Andrews, was born in the Poconos to Ukrainian immigrants. A prodigious talent in the kitchen, she cooked a vast repertoire of delicious, calorie-rich dishes, both Eastern European and American, to for-

The author's grandparents, Margaret and Andrew Andrews, with their sons circa 1942

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tify the body for hard labor, and to stave off the chill in a place where it snows in April. She was stout of body and heart, a devout Catholic who liked to feed family and neighbors. She dug holes in the ice of Lake Wallenpaupack to fish for striped bass. Her sons—not my father, but the ones who had stayed on the mountain—brought her fresh deer meat, and she turned it into venison kielbasa.

Once a year in summer, we would visit my grandmother on the lake, where she ran a small resort at Ironwood Point: a handful of cabins, some rowboats, and a general store stocked with fishing gear, bug spray, and jars of pickled eggs and penny candy. Once a year in winter, my grandmother would stuff the contents of her pantry into her station wagon and drive down from the mountains to preside over an enormous Christmas dinner at our house: sweet baked ham, roast turkey with all the trimmings, homemade pumpkin pie and whipped cream-laced “pumpkin puffs” made with *pâte à choux*, blueberry pies filled with the fruit she canned from the bushes that stained the cabin porches purple in summer.

But the best foods she made were Eastern European. My Grandma Andrews’ potato pierogies were melt-in-your-mouth; we ate them boiled, topped with caramelized onions. My mother was leery of Grandma Andrews’ wild mushroom soup, but we devoured it anyway; it had just a bit of the tang that characterized her *kapusta*, or sauerkraut soup. My father pan-fried her kielbasa, and we slathered it in spicy, stone-ground mustard. My siblings and I loved her *kolački*, sweet rolls filled with nutmeat, poppy seed, or prune.

We even ate her *haluśky*, though they were so basic, bland, and monochrome that they barely seemed like food to us. Back in my grandfather’s native country, these simple dumplings—the Slovakian national food—might have been dressed in bacon and a sheep’s cheese sauce. But the old-world cheese was hard to come by, and bacon was probably too expensive for my grandparents in the early years, so my father’s family had acquired a taste for *haluśky* topped with homemade sour cream and cottage cheese. It wasn’t my favorite.

In her seventies, my grandmother retired farther up the mountain to a piece of land with a two-bedroom cottage and a view from the ridge of the Waymart State Correctional Institution. My father rarely saw her. A Korean War veteran who couldn’t afford shoes, he had gone through college on the G.I. bill still wearing his combat boots. As a

kid, he picked stray lumps of coal from the dross at the dump for the family to burn as fuel. He thought his father a genius whose environs squelched his ambitions. My father, for his own part, had been determined to leave the place behind.

Grandma Andrews died when I was in my early thirties. She left her land to my father and his brothers, and my father, older and too broke now for anything fancier, took to it as a weekend retreat. That’s when he started trying to talk to me about things like *haluśky*.

I didn’t visit my father at the cottage until I started writing about food and figured that I should learn something about my grandmother’s style of cooking, the dishes that spoke of her immigrant roots. With her gone, there was only my father to rely on. He took to the task of guide with vigor. I awoke the first day of my up-country visit to the smell of onions frying in my grandmother’s cast-iron pan. My father was cooking pierogies. He had bought them off a little old lady on the mountain nearby. I ate them with the onions.

Then we went into town—Waymart, Penn-

Now he was who he was: an up-country boy who had found peace in his mother’s kitchen wearing his mother’s apron

sylvania, population 1,412—to visit Frank Kacer at Kacer’s Kielbassa, the butcher shop he owns on the main drag. Kacer’s brother, Michael, a rangy Vietnam vet in a baseball cap, was smoking pork kielbasa out back in a rehabbed firehose closer. Kacer hacked a hunk off a link still steaming from the smokehouse. It was warm, dense, and garlicky. There were signs taped up inside the store advising customers to bring their felled deer in to have them processed for kielbasa.

We stopped also at the home of Debbie DiMedici, the proprietor of a bakery in nearby Honesdale. DiMedici, whose maiden name was Ostin, had learned to bake from her Polish grandmother: babkas, *kruszyki* (angel wing cookies), rugelach, *kolački*. She described how to make Russian tea balls like my grandmother made them: melting little spheres baked with ground walnuts and rolled in powdered sugar once when warm and once again when cooled.

Back at the cottage, my father tied one of my grandmother’s old aprons around his waist, set a pot of water to boil, and proceeded to make *haluśky*. I watched him form



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Soda Water

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the soft, potato-rich dough and drop dollops into the roiling water. We ate the *halušky* with sour cream, cottage cheese, and plenty of salt and freshly ground black pepper. They were warm and earthy and fatty and filling; they were delicious, in fact. Then my father sent me off with a car trunk stuffed with up-mountain foods and the plea that I, one day, write an article on him and Coal Cracker cuisine.

He sent me off, too, with a new understanding of who he is. For some reason—probably because he didn't want me to—I had never before been able to connect him with my grandmother's mountaintop. But the years had mellowed my father. He still drank, but not as much. The Rolls-Royces, rehabbed from junk heaps he had bought on the cheap as a much younger man, had all been sold or sat fallow in his warehouse, collapsing back into heaps. His business—he was a hardworking engineer with a boom-and-bust history—was only sputtering along. He wasn't living his dream of the high life anymore; now he was who he was: an up-country boy who had somehow found peace puttering around his mother's kitchen wearing his mother's apron.

THEN MY FATHER'S LIFE changed again. Another prison—a maximum-security federal facility—rose from farmland on the other side of the ridge. My fathers' brothers, needing money, insisted that my grandmother's land be sold. And my father, who didn't believe in doctors, had his first stroke. Then he had his second one.

But my father could have saved his tears. Recently, I called him to get a recipe. He dictated it slowly over the phone, struggling to enunciate the words. Tonight, I will grate potatoes; I will mix them with flour and eggs, and also some onion, to make a dough that is not too loose or too dense; I will scoop the dough up with a teaspoon to form little dumplings and, as I have a few times already in the past weeks, drop the dumplings in boiling water and fish them out when they've popped to the top. Then I'll eat them topped with sour cream, caramelized onions, and crumbled bacon, and I'll enjoy them immensely, for my father has finally succeeded in teaching me how to make *halušky*. And the story that my father so longed to have me write? Well, it might not read the way he had imagined it. But this is my story—or it's our story, for better or worse, his and mine—and with his help, I've finally written it. 



Halušky

(Boiled Potato Dumplings)

SERVES 8–10

These earthy potato dumplings, a staple of families of Eastern European descent in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, are delicious tossed with sweet caramelized onions and bacon and topped with sour cream.

- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3 slices bacon, cut into ½" pieces
- 2 small yellow onion, 1 thinly sliced, 1 finely grated
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1¼ lb. russet potatoes (about 2 large), peeled, finely grated (soak in water until needed, then drain)
- 2 cups flour
- ¾ tsp. baking soda
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Sour cream, for serving

1 Heat butter and bacon in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat, and cook, stirring occasionally, until bacon is crisp and its fat has rendered, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain and set aside. Add sliced onion to skillet; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and lightly caramelized, about 6 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

2 Bring a 6-qt. saucepan of salted water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, stir together grated onion, potatoes, flour, baking soda, eggs, and salt and pepper in a bowl with a fork until a thick dough forms. Working in batches, drop teaspoon-size balls of dough into the water, and cook until the dumplings float to the surface and are cooked through, about 3 minutes. Drain dumplings, and then divide between serving plates. Top each portion with bacon, caramelized onions, and sour cream before serving.



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Bob Nolet Carolus Nolet Sr. Carl Nolet Jr.

Botanical ingredients define the character of gin. For centuries that character has been dominated by juniper berries: piney and bitter. The Nolets aspired to develop a gin that was more pleasing to their palates.

So 11th generation sons Carl Jr. and Bob, along with their father, Carolus Sr., 10th generation owner of the Nolet Distillery, began experimenting with exotic botanicals, searching for floral and fruit-forward flavors – an alternative to traditional gins.

Slowly, the right notes emerged, harmonizing with each other beautifully in the glass. The Nolets highlight a few of the signature botanicals: alluring Turkish rose, sweet and succulent peach and robust, slightly tart raspberry.



Turkish Rose

Also known as Damask rose, it adds a light, refined air.



Peach

A succulent fruit with delicate flesh – the peach lends a fresh, sweet flavor.



Raspberry

The raspberry provides a robust, slightly tart flavor.



The distillation of NOLET'S Silver is a proprietary process that blends tradition with innovation. To achieve the perfect balance of taste and texture, NOLET'S Silver is made in a custom copper still that combines pot still and column still distillation.

The botanicals in NOLET'S Silver are individually distilled or macerated, allowing each to become fully expressed in its signature floral and fruit-forward flavor. This, combined with a classic dry finish, sets NOLET'S Silver apart from other gins.

Following a secret recipe, the signature botanicals are individually infused into a base neutral grain spirit made from the finest winter wheat. Then, they are gently blended and allowed to rest in order to achieve the perfect balance.

The family crest adorning the bottle is a tribute to over 300 years of tradition and distilling experience of the Nolet family. Dedicated to the highest standards of quality, a member of the Nolet family approves every batch of NOLET'S Silver before bottling.

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Signature Cocktails

NOLET'S Silver Dry Gin Martini

1 oz. NOLET'S Silver
Stir NOLET'S Silver with ice in a cocktail shaker. Serve straight up in a martini glass. Garnish with a twist of lemon.

Total ABV: .48 ounces



NOLET'S Silver Dry Gin & Tonic or Soda

1 oz. NOLET'S Silver
3 oz. Tonic Water or Soda Water
Pour NOLET'S Silver and tonic water or soda water into an ice-filled highball glass. Stir well. Garnish with a wedge of lime.

Total ABV: .48 ounces



NOLET'S Silver Dry Gin Bramble

1 oz. NOLET'S Silver
.50 oz. Fresh Lemon Juice
.25 oz. Simple Syrup
Cassis Liqueur
Pour first three ingredients into an ice-filled rocks glass. Stir well. Top with a light drizzle of Cassis Liqueur. Garnish with a raspberry.

Total ABV: .58 ounces



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CLASSIC

Sphere of Influence

Where Swedes have ventured, the meatball has followed

BY SUSANNA HOFFMAN



those who maintain that a plate of Swedish meatballs should also be adorned with a heap of bread-and-butter pickles, or *pressgurka*, as they're known in Sweden. Not so at my mother's table. Oh, the pickles were always there, but in a separate crystal pickle dish, to be eaten at the diner's discretion.

By the time my grandparents left Sweden in the late 1890s, *köttbullar* was firmly established as the national dish. The first printed recipe, in a cookbook penned by Cajsa Warg in 1755, doesn't mention accompaniments: Potatoes weren't widely consumed in Sweden until the first half of the 19th century, while the use of lingonberries as an accent for all kinds of meat dishes was then, as now, so ubiquitous as to be taken for granted.

Over the centuries, where Swedes went, the meatball rolled along. I've often wondered whether the appetite for the dish is still as keen in Sweden as it is in, say, Minneapolis, and so on a recent trip I was delighted to discover that Swedish meatballs remain an object of fierce devotion in their native land. They can be purchased prepackaged at any supermarket; they're eaten in homes across the country, at any time of the day. When I visited the city of Göteborg, on the west coast, the lively cafés along the main avenue, Kungälvssavennyn, were all serving them. Farther south in the port of Malmö, parties of after-work revelers chased their beers with plain meatballs in the many brasseries lining the town's two ancient main squares. Even in vibrant Stockholm, the capital, where there's no shortage of innovative cooking right now, I could always count on finding the familiar constellation of meatballs, mashed potatoes, gravy, and lingonberries.

What I didn't know until I traveled in

SUSANNA HOFFMAN's most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "Glories of Greece" (*August/September 2010*).

ONLY OCCASIONALLY IS A food so linked to a country that just to think of the land is to think of the dish, but that is exactly the case with the Swedish meatball. The classic iteration, a combination of ground beef and pork, is precisely one inch in diameter, perfectly browned all over, subtly seasoned with allspice, and glistening with the butter it's cooked in. I should know: As the granddaughter of Martina and Karl Fahlstrom, immigrants

from, respectively, the Småland and Värmland regions of Sweden, I grew up on them.

My grandmother turned out meatballs, or *köttbullar*, by the hundreds, as did her companions at the Salem Lutheran Church in Moline, Illinois. My mother followed in her footsteps. I had meatballs for an after-school snack and—along with mashed potatoes, milky gravy, and the regulation dollop of lingonberry preserves—for dinner. There are

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Sweden is that beyond that time-honored presentation, the meatball often appears in another classic guise: on a sandwich made with dark brown bread, lettuce, and a layer of creamy diced-beet salad (*rödbetssallad*). The same sandwich is sold in the food stalls of every Swedish city's central train station; early in my travels I fell into the habit of purchasing one to eat as my train—invariably on time to the minute—hurtled into the countryside. The beet salad is typically enlivened by a dash of cider vinegar and a grating of horseradish. In the full bloom of Sweden's short summer, a sprinkling of fresh dill is often added, and in the brisk days of autumn, sometimes diced green apple.

Still, when it came to the meatballs themselves, all of those I sampled in Sweden were remarkably consistent, though standards of spicing and tenderness varied somewhat from cook to cook. In my family, we use equal measures of ground beef and pork, and the onion is added raw; minced finely enough, it readily cooks within the meat, and to my maternal kin the extra step of pre-sautéing would have

The classic iteration is precisely browned all over, subtly seasoned with all-spice, and glistening with the butter it's cooked in

been un-Swedishly inefficient. We eschew black pepper in favor of milder, muskier white pepper, which is more traditional in Scandinavian cooking; ground allspice and sea salt are the only other seasonings. The accompanying mashed potatoes are lubricated with plenty of butter and heavy cream, and the gravy is made with savory pan juices and yet more cream, still the pillar of Swedish cuisine that it was in the days when every rural villager kept a dairy cow. The tart lingonberries that balance out the dish are harvested wild in forested regions like Värmland and neighboring Dalarna and then preserved, traditionally with nothing more than sugar and a splash of water. (You can harvest yours at the nearest Ikea.)

Every Swede has his or her own secrets to success when it comes to making *köttbullar*, a birthright passed down from one generation to the next. Recently, watching the Swedish film version of the mega best seller *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, I smiled to see the protagonist, Mikael Blomkvist, advise his niece that when rolling meatballs, it helps to wet your hands. My grandmother advised the same. 🐾

Köttbullar med Potatismos

(Swedish Meatballs with Mashed Potatoes)

SERVES 6

In Sweden meatballs are served plain, as a snack; on a sandwich with beet salad; or as they are here, with mashed potatoes, creamy gravy, and tart lingonberry preserves.

- 4 lb. (about 5 large) russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 2¼ cups heavy cream
- 14 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black or white pepper, to taste
- 2 slices (about 3 oz.) crustless white bread, torn into small pieces
- 12 oz. ground pork
- 12 oz. ground beef
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ½ small yellow onion, minced
- 3 tbsp. flour
- 3 cups beef stock
- Lingonberry preserves, for serving

1 Make the mashed potatoes: Place potatoes in a 4-qt. saucepan and cover with water by 1"; bring to a boil over high heat, and cook until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Drain potatoes and pass through a ricer or food mill set over a bowl; set aside. Meanwhile bring 1½ cups cream and 12 tbsp. butter to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan; pour over potatoes and whisk until smooth. Season with salt and pepper, and keep warm until ready to serve.

2 Make the meatballs: Place ½ cup cream and bread in a small bowl; let sit until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl along with pork, beef, allspice, egg, and onion, season with salt and pepper, and mix until evenly combined. Shape mixture into about thirty 1-oz. balls, about 1" in diameter. Heat remaining butter in a 12" skillet over medium heat; working in batches, add meatballs and cook, turning as needed, until browned all over and cooked through, about 12 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer meatballs to a plate and set aside.

3 Return skillet to medium-high heat. Add flour, and cook, stirring, until smooth and light brown, about 4 minutes. Whisk in beef stock until smooth, and then bring to a boil; stir in remaining cream and return meatballs to gravy. Reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring gently, until meatballs are warmed through, about 3 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Serve meatballs and gravy over mashed potatoes and garnish with a generous dollop of lingonberry preserves.

Discover Chile

A picturesque and gastronomic destination



THERE'S A REASON people say Chile is a natural choice. The long, narrow country, tucked between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountains, boasts the most spectacular and diverse scenery in the world with hundreds of thousands of acres of natural beauty.

Moving south, visitors will discover Chile's most surprising diversity: a mix of historic cities and pristine environments, cultural riches and authentic gastronomy drawn from the riches of the land and sea.

The lakes and volcanoes region offers many vantage points: slipping through the water on ferry, canoe or kayak, trotting up a trail on horseback, zipping through forests on a canopy or skimming snow-covered volcano caps in a small plane.

There's great discovery in built environments, too—historic places like Valdivia, a European-influenced city of quaint architecture and culinary sophistication. With 2,600 miles of coastline, seafood dominates the gastronomy. Indeed, it is so revered here that Chile's Nobel Prize-winning poet Pablo Neruda once wrote an ode to a Chilean fish chowder! From ceviche to congrio, sea bass to

salmon, the range of recipes and the wines to go with them is dizzying and delicious. Start your meal with a pisco sour, then let the pairings begin.



In Patagonia, visitors will find stunning landscapes—virgin forests, islands, fiords, icebergs and glaciers—all untouched by humans. Waterfalls and rivers rush by, and winding roads disappear into forests and mountains, guaranteeing an intimate experience with nature. Fittingly, such wild landscape hosts wild fauna; pumas, rheas, sea lions, whales, penguins and sea birds.

From ceviche to congrio, sea bass to salmon, the range of recipes and the wines to go with them is dizzying and delicious.

On the shore of the Strait of Magellan is Punta Arenas, Chile's southernmost capital. Here, the gastronomic pride of the region is Magallanes lamb, prepared various ways, but most famously spit-roasted over an open fire. Like most food and wine products in Chile, the lamb is raised naturally and prepared with great attention to flavors. It pairs deliciously with red wines such as the native Carmenère, known for its red fruit and sweet bell pepper taste profiles.

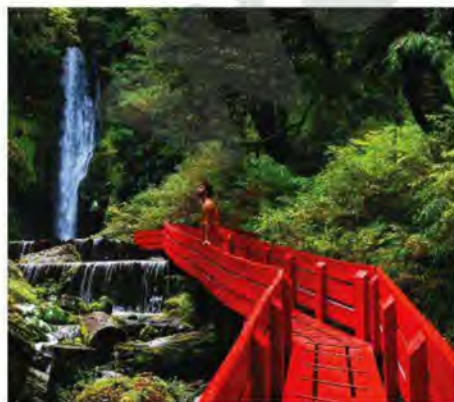


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ITALIAN AMERICA



Over the past century and a half, Italian immigrants and their descendants have given rise to one of this country's most vibrant, delicious, and important cuisines. Whether it's served at home or from a restaurant kitchen, Italian-American food—from spaghetti and meatballs to pizza, lasagne to escarole soup—is a celebration of resourcefulness, culinary invention, and America's local bounty. Starting on page 54, with an essay by John Mariani, we honor a way of eating that taps into our cravings for hearty, gutsy flavors and encourages us to savor the pleasures of the table with family and friends. —*The Editors*

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A cook at a New York City restaurant plates spaghetti, circa 1937

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Layers of History Lasagne is one of the world's most venerable pasta dishes.

Italian immigrants took pride in feeding their families sumptuously

At my family's home in the Bronx, we ate slices of fresh, milky mozzarella with seeded bread from the Italian bakery down the block, macaroni shells stuffed with Polly-O ricotta, lasagne with little meatballs between the layers, baked rigatoni, eggplant parmigiana, chicken cacciatore, beef braciola. We drank chianti that came in a straw-covered flask and espresso from a drip pot, with a sliver of lemon peel. This was the 1950s and '60s, and though Mom was always cooking for our family and friends, Dad knew his way around the kitchen, too. He took to the stove on weekends, concentrating on a single dish: lobster fra diavolo, because my mother hated handling live lobsters.

We thought we were eating authentic Italian food, because the dishes were the same ones all the other Italian families we knew cooked and ate. But in reality, our cuisine was an American invention: an amalgam of hearty, rustic dishes brought here, primarily by southern Italian immigrants (my grandparents came from Abruzzo and Campania), then adapted and embellished upon in American kitchens. By the time I started writing about food in the mid 1970s, this homegrown cuisine had fallen out of favor as northern Italian-inspired dishes, deemed (sometimes erroneously) lighter and more authentic, became all the rage. I can't say that I didn't welcome the new trend of delicate fresh egg pasta, or celebrate the fact that grilled branzino had replaced shrimp scampi on so many Italian menus. But I will never deny my love for a supersize plate of spaghetti with homemade meatballs, or an eggplant par-

mesan hero, with its ample breading and sauce and molten mozzarella. There's a beauty and succor to Italian-American food, and it's for a good reason that so many chefs have been returning to those classics recently, preparing them with a newfound zeal and sense of respect.

The story of the rise and fall and rise again of Italian-American food is a fascinating one; it's an American story, its plot interwoven with the entrepreneurial drive, embrace of pop culture, proliferation of convenience foods, and creativity of home cooks that has informed our country's culinary spirit. It began authentically enough, with Italian immigrants who were skilled at making the very most from the very least. The *abbondanza* for which Italian-American cooking is known stems from the fact that these immigrant cooks, most of whom came from dire poverty, took pride in being able to feed family and friends sumptuously on the kinds of foods they couldn't afford back home. Ingredients like mozzarella and ricotta were no longer used as accents, or as meals in themselves: They were added to dishes with abandon. My father's lobster fra diavolo, which was likely inspired by tomato-based seafood stews made with small spiny or inexpensive rock lobster in Italy, was another example: When it was popularized in the 1950s in Italian-American restaurants, it became a lavish dish—far bigger in size and flavor than its predecessors—of fat New England lobsters cooked in a fiery tomato sauce. Another ingredient considered an extravagance in southern Italian cooking, veal, could be found on early Italian-American menus in myriad forms: *alla parmigiana* (breaded and covered with sauce and cheese), *alla marsala* (doused with fortified wine), and as massive one-pound veal chops, often stuffed with mozzarella and prosciutto, then smothered with tomato sauce.

Foods from the homeland became springboards for invention in the States. Take pizza, which evolved from its simple Neapolitan roots into styles unlike anything found in Italy (see "Any Way You" *(continued on page 58)*)

SUNDAY'S SAUCE

Sunday was always a busy day for us at Di Palo's, the store my family opened as a *latteria*, or dairy shop, in Manhattan's Little Italy in 1925. Still, we closed early, because by three o'clock we had somewhere to be: around the table, eating my grandmother's spaghetti and meatballs. She'd start the meatballs early in the morning, and they'd simmer for a long, long time in the sauce, along with beef bones she'd roasted in the oven, and the house would fill with the most incredible aroma. She'd give me one meatball to try before the meal was ready, but that's it; after that, she'd shoo me away when I asked for more, maybe put some sauce on a plate to sop up with bread, which kept me happy. Sure, spaghetti and meatballs isn't Italian-Italian (they have meatballs in Italy, but they're not cooked in sauce), but for me, they're the single most important dish in my cultural heritage. You have to remember, most Italian-Americans came here with just a few dollars in their pocket. They'd go to the butcher and buy cheap cuts, and they got really good at seasoning and stretching them with bread crumbs, cheese, eggs. They used a lot of garlic, not just for the flavor but because it was considered good for you. So from these simple ingredients you get these beautiful meatballs and delicious sauce served in a big bowl of inexpensive dried pasta. Nowadays, when we make grandma's meatballs at the store, I can't help thinking about how special they are. —*Lou Di Palo, co-owner of Di Palo Fine Foods*

GREAT MOMENTS IN ITALIAN-AMERICAN FOOD



1524

Giovanni da Verrazano is the first European to enter New York Harbor. A century later, Venetian Pietro Cesare Alberti is the country's first Italian immigrant.



1837

Two Italian brothers from Ticino, Switzerland, open the nation's first fine dining restaurant, Delmonico's, in downtown Manhattan, serving French cuisine.

1852

Ligurian chocolatier Domingo Ghirardelli opens a storefront in San Francisco. Within a few decades, his chocolate is sold in supermarkets nationwide.



1899

Frederic T. Bioletti perfects a method for canning olives, a key Italian-American ingredient, launching California's olive industry.



1899

Polly-O Italian Cheese Company is founded by Giuseppe Pollio, who sold his handmade mozzarella and ricotta from a stand in Coney Island, New York. >>



Spaghetti and meatballs at Di Palo's Fine Foods in New York City (see page 74 for a recipe).

MELTING POT

From 1876 to 1924, almost one third of Italy's population emigrated to America. Millions settled into neighborhoods across the country, bringing ingredients, flavors, and techniques from their regions back home. From Sicilians in Manhattan's Little Italy to Ligurians in San Francisco's North Beach, Italians created rich cultural enclaves that gave rise to a new cuisine: a unique hybrid called Italian-American food.

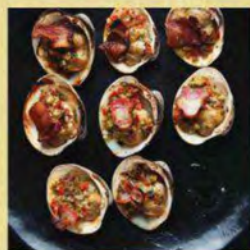


REGIONAL ITALIAN-AMERICAN SPECIALTIES

Chicago's baked **chicken Vesuvio**, redolent with white wine and garlic, was likely minted at a bygone Taylor Street eatery in the 1940s. (See page 72 for a recipe.)



Clams casino, bivalves topped with parmesan, bread crumbs, and bacon, was invented at Narragansett Pier Casino in Rhode Island in 1894, and soon became a local specialty.



It's believed that St. Louis's **toasted ravioli** came to be in 1943 when the chef at Oldani's restaurant salvaged some mistakenly fried ravioli with a dusting of Parmesan and bread crumbs.



Johnny Marzetti, a macaroni casserole invented in the 1920s by Marzetti's restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, is served for school lunch across the state. (See page 72 for a recipe.)



Utica greens, named for the New York town where Italian factory workers settled in the 1900s, is a sauté of escarole, bread crumbs, potatoes, and hot peppers. (See page 74 for a recipe.)



UNITED STATES OF ITALY

The first American city to experience an influx of Italians was New Orleans: between 1850 and 1870, there were more Italians living there than anywhere else in the country, and they introduced such specialties as the mufuletta sandwich and spaghetti bordelaise, with a Frenchified garlicky sauce. In New York, Italian immigrants, predominantly Sicilians, started settling into tenement housing in what would become Manhattan's Little Italy in the 1880s; by the 1900s, other Little Italys sprang up, like the Bronx's Belmont neighborhood (famed for its food shops along Arthur Avenue); Bay Ridge and Bensonhurst, Brooklyn; and Corona, Queens. Over the decades, Italians settled across Long Island, New Jersey, and neighboring areas, including New Haven, Connecticut. Its Little Italy, Wooster Square, is famed for its pastries and thin-crust pizza.

New England port cities were also destinations: Boston's North End was a complex of small communities defined by Italian regional identity: Sicilians, Genoese, Campanians, and Abruzzesi settled on separate blocks. Three Sicilians from the same village founded Prince Macaroni in 1912, which now is part of New World Pasta, the largest pasta-maker in the U.S. Just south of Boston, the Fabre line of cruise ships brought immigrants from Northern Italy to settle in Providence, Rhode Island's Federal Hill. South Philadelphia is home to the country's second largest Italian-American population after

New York: Genoese and Ligurians started settling there in the 1840s. Farther south, Genoese, Neapolitans, and Sicilians landed in Baltimore's inner harbor and then stayed to work the docks. Fishermen's wives made spaghetti with crab sauce, now a local specialty.

Since the 1920s, Italian food has long had a home in Chicago; in the mid 1920s the city had 257 Italian-owned restaurants. Another Midwestern enclave is St. Louis's The Hill. Long before the rest of the country became infatuated with northern Italian cuisine, the Hill, which has strong Lombardian roots, was dishing out the region's saffron-scented risotto Milanese. Fleeing over-populated cities, Italians moved south to Little Rock, Arkansas, and to the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains, to farm grapes for wine. Italians from the Alps made wine in Valdese, North Carolina, and Salt Lake City, Utah; they mined coal in Indiana and West Virginia.

Italians have long been drawn to California's Mediterranean climate. Northern Italians dominated the state's agriculture in the 1880s, planting artichokes in Castroville in the 1920s, and garlic and olives near Salinas. In 1870, Ligurians fishing in Monterey Bay supplied San Franciscans with 90 percent of their seafood; they ran San Diego's sardine and tuna canning industries. The nation's oldest Italian restaurant, Fior d'Italia in San Francisco's Little Italy, North Beach, has served cioppino, the rich, tomato-based seafood stew, since it opened in 1886. —Marne Setton



In West Virginia, the doughy **pepperoni roll** was invented by a Calabrian baker in the early 20th century as a hearty lunch for Italian miners to take with them to work.



We have Italians from Philly to thank for the city's **roast pork sandwich**, with garlicky spinach or broccoli rabe, succulent pork, roasted peppers, and provolone cheese.



Focaccia, a Genoese flatbread topped with everything from scallions to tomato sauce, became a specialty of Liguria Bakery in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood.



We would no more insult a friend's sauce than we would his mother or grandmother

(continued from page 54) Slice It", page 60), with more cheese, more sauce, and more toppings. Or, tomato sauce, for that matter: When my wife and I first traveled across Italy, on our honeymoon in 1977, we saw neither marinara (that quickly cooked sauce of just tomatoes, garlic, and oil) or the long-simmered "Sunday sauce," stocked with all kinds of meats, which most families I knew while growing up served on Sunday. Of course, tomato sauce exists in Italy; the irony is that tomatoes were brought to Italy from the Americas in the 16th century and considered poisonous by all but southerners, who found them a delicious addition to their meager diet and discovered that they flourished in their sunny climate. Which explains why when more than 4 million Italians, a vast majority of them from the south, immigrated to America between 1890 and 1910, they brought tomatoes, and tomato sauce, with them. Every cook had a version, and it became the food on which immigrant mothers staked their eminence within their neighborhoods. Growing up, we would no more insult a friend's sauce than we would his mother or grandmother. The sauce was sacred.

Soon enough, red sauce became emblematic of Italian food in the United States, embraced by Americans from every ethnic group and marketed by savvy restaurateurs as part and parcel of the cuisine's abundance. My family dined out at least once a week, usually at a place called Amerigo's in the Bronx, which began as a pizza stand in the 1930s and evolved into a restaurant of extraordi-

nary breadth, with a menu that ranged from antipasti to zabaglione, and a dining room decked out with an illuminated waterfall and a mural of the nearby Throgs Neck Bridge. It was at restaurants like Amerigo's that we feasted on the kind of fancy dishes that Mom didn't make on weeknights: I always had the gnocchi with tomato sauce and my brother, the manicotti. My father would order a massive New York strip steak, introduced to the city's steakhouses by Italian-American butchers, and my mother would have filet of sole "Livornese," a dish with clams and mussels, white wine, and a moderate amount of garlic. Portions were huge, including the cheesecake and cannoli for dessert. A waiter came to the table to whip zabaglione in a big copper pot.

The epitome of this style of dining was Mamma Leone's on 48th Street in Manhattan. That multistoried spectacle of Italian kitsch, with nude statuary and blocks of mozzarella and provolone cheese on every table, opened in 1906 and was operated by the same family until it was sold to a restaurant group in 1959, eventually closing in 1994. Had Verdi lived to eat there, he would have written an opera about it, and Enrico Caruso and Luisa Tetrazzini—both of whom were immortalized in pasta dishes that bore their names—would have sung the leads.

AS MUCH AS AMERICANS adored places like Mamma Leone's, Italian-American food was often referred to as grub for "greasers" and "garlic eaters." It wasn't until the arrival of first-rate Italian ingredients—many of which had been kept out of the U.S. by trade laws—in the 1970s and '80s that Italian-American cooks were able to reproduce the regional flavors that travelers to Italy complained they could never find in the States. This included prosciutto di Parma, extra-virgin olive oil from different locales, parmigiano-reggiano, arborio rice, (continued on page 65)

FEAST OF THE SEVEN FISHES

My grandmother and Aunt Frances lived in railroad apartments across the hall from each other in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. On Christmas Eve their entire apartment building smelled delicious because they left their doors open while shuttling between tiny kitchens to put together the Feast of the Seven Fishes. Started in America and sometimes called La Vigilia (the Italian word for "eve"), the feast commemorates the wait for the birth of Jesus; since eating meat was not an option on holy days, it features fish. But nobody knows why seven: Grandma said it represented the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church; Aunt Frances claimed it was the seven virtues; and Grandpa, sipping homemade wine, would say: "Seven represents perfection in the holy Bible. You gonna argue with perfection?" It didn't matter because they served more than seven anyway. The menu varied, but we had our favorites, like baccala, or salt cod, salad ❶, pasta con le sarde served Sicilian-style with whole sardines ❷, and calamari with peas and potatoes ❸, the squid only cooked for a minute or two so it stayed tender. Usually there was stuffed calamari marinara ❹ and sole smothered with olives ❺; and there was always a fish served whole ❻, like branzino with fennel and onions. In prosperous years shrimp scampi with capellini ❷ and lobster fra diavolo graced the table ❸. Nowadays, the feast is prepared in one big suburban kitchen—but when I tuck into the flaky baccala, I'm right back in Grandma's Brooklyn kitchen. —Greg Ferro

				
1903	1905	1905	1915	1929
New York lemon ice vendor Italo Marchioni files the patent for a mold to make mass-produced pastry cones for serving ice cream.	Sicilian Vincent Taormina founds an importing business in New Orleans that becomes Progresso, selling bread crumbs and canned soups.	The nation's first pizzeria, Lombardi's, opens in New York City, where it remains today. By the 1940s, pizzerias had opened across the U.S.	Emanuele Ronzoni starts a pasta company in Queens, New York, introducing "fancy-cut" shapes such as penne rigati from his native Liguria.	Hector Boiardi, a Cleveland chef, starts selling boxed spaghetti dinners in supermarkets under the brand Chef Boy-Ar-Dee.



Feast of the Seven Fishes favorites
(see page 72 for recipes)



3

1

ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT



Pizza originated in southern Italy, but it took on a life of its own here. America's first specimens were simple flatbreads that emerged from bakeries' coal-fired ovens with a fetching bituminous char. A Neapolitan baker named Gennaro Lombardi opened the nation's first pizzeria in New York in 1905, and to this day Lombardi's pies ❶ stand up as stellar examples of Italian-America's take on the Neapolitan original: Larger in size, they're topped with fresh-tasting sauce, milky mozzarella, grated Romano cheese, olive oil, and aromatic basil leaves, and cooked in a coal oven. Today, most New York pizza uses coarser flour, gooier industrial mozzarella, and a longer cook-time in an electric oven. In New Haven, Connecticut, a different style of pizza, known as *apizza*, evolved from the same Neapolitan roots. Frank Pepe opened his eponymous pizzeria in that city's Little Italy in 1925, and today his establishment and neighboring ones still make pies that are thinner, wetter, and more heavily charred than most New York-style pizza. In the mid 1960s, Pepe introduced its signature clam pizza ❷ topped with juicy bivalves, grated pecorino, garlic, and oregano. Chicago pizza is a different beast entirely. When Pizzeria Uno founders Ike Sewell and Ric Riccardo invented it in 1943, they weren't trying for true Italian. They believed Chicagoans needed something more

substantial, ergo deep dish pizza ❸, which is more a casserole than a flatbread. California is where pizza became boutique food, starting in the 1980s, as part of a larger exaltation of Mediterranean cuisine. Alice Waters put a wood-burning oven into Berkeley's the Café at Chéz Panisse, and Wolfgang Puck got famous by feeding Hollywood stars \$100 caviar pies. Puck's pizza man, Ed LaDou, went on to found the California Pizza Kitchen chain, now famous around the country for its barbecued-chicken pizza ❹. America's pizza map is a crazy quilt of invention, from inspired to insane. If you doubt that, have a taste of pulled-pork pizza in Memphis, or saltine-thin, unleavened-crust pizza in St. Louis, where mozzarella is shunned in favor of Provel cheese, a mix of cheddar, Swiss, and provolone. Detroit's signature is a thick-crust variation, called square pizza because it is cut into squares, gilded with caramelized cheese, and dotted with sauce. In the pork-loving Quad Cities region of Illinois and Iowa, pizzas come blanketed with ground Italian sausage, and they are cut into long pieces called "strips." Square, lightly sauced Grandma pizza is a Long Island specialty. Similar pizzas are known in other parts of the country as bakery pizza; a whole isn't a pie, it's a tray. —Jane and Michael Stern, authors of *roadfood*. com



Scenes from San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood. Above, from left: shops on Green Street off Columbus Avenue; a baker wraps up focaccia to go at Liguria Bakery; a customer at Molinari Delicatessen.



From left: baker Mary Gebhardt transfers tomato sauce and green onion focaccia to racks, below rosemary, garlic, and green onion focaccia at Liguria Bakery; diners enjoy an al fresco lunch on Columbus Avenue.



From left: Cappuccino at Mario's Bohemian Cigar Store Cafe; Calzone's restaurant on Columbus Avenue; raspberry rings at Mara's Italian Pastry.

LOCAL FAVORITE

I'm not Italian-American, but I grew up loving cioppino, the hearty shellfish stew that's one of San Francisco's greatest contributions to culinary history. You rarely see this dish outside of the city, which is such a shame. Invented by Bay Area fishermen, many of whom hailed from Genoa, Italy, in the 19th century, the dish takes its name from the word in Genoese dialect that means "little soup." But cioppino is hardly little: it's made with all kinds of seafood simmered with lots of tomatoes and wine. While you won't find the exact same dish anywhere in Italy, it's similar to many shellfish soups, from *cacciucco* to *brodetto* to *bouillabaisse*, you encounter up and down the Mediterranean coast. Back in the 1940s and '50s, my parents were new Californians—migrants from the East Coast who settled in the largely Italian neighborhood of North Beach, where cioppino was the pinnacle of the local menu—heaps of clams, mussels, briny prawns, and sweet small shrimp, and chunks of flaky fish. We used to go to a now-long-gone restaurant that gave you a paper bib and served the soup in a big cauldron; it came with lots of sourdough bread, which is the perfect foil for the brick-red broth. You'd sop it up, and use your fingers to extract sweet meat from the shellfish. Dad made it at home, too, with whatever shellfish he could find at the supermarket or fishmonger's. The dish is so direct, it defies pretension or turning it into some arty, froufrou thing. It's fantastic and it's ours.

—James Oseland

Cioppino, a hearty seafood stew (see page 72 for a recipe), at Sotto Mare in North Beach, San Francisco



ART OF ANTIPASTI

Is there a better way to start a meal than with an abundant antipasti platter, artfully arranged with ruffles of prosciutto ❶, briny olives ❷, roasted red peppers, marinated artichokes and mushrooms and pepperoncini, chunks of Parmesan ❸, fresh mozzarella ❹, and whatever else catches the preparer's fancy? *Antipasto*, which means "before the meal," stretches back to medieval times in Italy, when diners used to mingle over finger foods, both sweet and savory, before sitting down to eat; early recipes included everything from sugared nuts to clotted cream to spiced ham. Over the centuries, antipasti became the domain of restaurants, which would set out dozens of stuffed, marinated, roasted, and grilled vegetables, meat, and fish. "The aim is to excite rather than fill diners, who will then be inspired to choose yet more delicacies from the menu," writes Gillian Riley in *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food* (Oxford University Press, 2007). People rarely created such elaborate spreads at home, and when Italians emigrated to America, they would often set out a simple platter of store-bought ingredients to be shared as they eased into the meal. Over the years, home cooks and chefs have gotten craftier with their antipasti, incorporating more color (fresh tomatoes ❺, sautéed zucchini ❻ or broccoli rabe ❼) and a range of flavors and textures (nuts ❽, different kinds of salami; fresh ricotta ❾ for slathering over bread). But the spirit of the dish is as generous and convivial as ever.

—Dana Bowen

(continued from page 58) funghi porcini, balsamic vinegar, and outstanding Italian wines from producers like Angelo Gaja and Giovanni di Piero Antinori.

By that time, many Italian-American restaurants had become tired and tiresome, and some restaurateurs tried to refine the clichés—and justify higher prices—by turning to northern Italy for inspiration. In New York there were Romeo Salta (opened in 1953), Nanni (1968), and Il Nido (1979); in Santa Monica, California, Valentino's (1972). They all downplayed the red sauce factor, substituting butter and cream sauces and adding—at \$20 a plate—risotto and, of all things, polenta, a dish that had been the thrice-a-day staple of poor northern Italians who could afford to eat little else. This food was welcomed as authentic regional Italian: Lasagne with meatballs and meat sauce was dismissed in favor of *lasagne alla Bolognese*, with *besciamella* and spinach pasta. Italian-American cheesecake and cannoli were replaced by tiramisù and *panna cotta*. The old chianti bottles in straw *fiaschi* baskets were abandoned in favor of expensive barolos, barbarescos, and "super-Tuscans." Murals of Mount Vesuvius were painted over in favor of blown-up photos of Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni. Red-checked tablecloths disappeared; now the tables were set with Frette linens.

The zeitgeist looked north for another reason: Italian fashion and design (centered in northern cities like Milan and Florence) was all the rage in the 1980s. The chicest new restaurants in the U.S. proclaimed they were Tuscan-style trattorias or grills (even if they didn't serve Tuscan food). Among the first to promote their Tuscan origins were Da Silvano, opened in 1975, and Il Cantinori (1983). Both, still operating in New York's Greenwich Village, became darlings of magazine editors, art gallery owners, and other members of the cultural elite. Before long, their menus were copied across the country, and extra-virgin olive oil became the new red sauce.

The Italian food you'll find from Moscow to Mumbai is likely the red sauce variety

These northern Italian-inspired places adopted the tenets of the Mediterranean Diet, named for a book written in 1994 by cookbook author (and *SAVEUR* contributor) Nancy Harmon Jenkins. The basic argument was that what *real* Italians ate—a diet abundant in vegetables, seafood, grains, and olive oil—was far more healthful than the meaty, rich, fried, cheese-laden, red sauce-drowned food of Italian-Americans. Quick sautéed greens and *farro* were in; chicken parmesan and meatballs were out.

BUT WHO DOESN'T LOVE MEATBALLS? As influential as the Mediterranean Diet has been, the Italian food you are most likely to encounter in London, Berlin, Moscow, or Mumbai will be far closer to the old "red sauce" archetype than to regional Italian menus featuring Alba's white truffles, Sardinia's cheeses, or Venice's cuttlefish ink risotto. Even the most trailblazing purveyors of modern Italian cuisine in America, while proudly serving regional specialties, still champion the good old-fashioned Italian-American classics, even if they change the names. The addictive, confectioners' sugar-dusted fried doughballs known in the Italian-American canon as *zeppole* often show up as similar *bombolini*, and what used to be called plain macaroni is now broken down into specific subclassifications, whether it's rigatoni rigate, garganelli, or casarecci. At Osteria Morini in New York City, Michael White—born in Wisconsin and trained at San Domenico, the Michelin 3-star outside of Bologna—serves mostly Emilia-Romagna-style food, but (continued on page 71)



1926

The Palm, an Italian-American steakhouse featuring fancy dishes like surf and turf, opens in Manhattan. The chain is still going strong today.

1943

Cesare Mondavi and his family purchase Charles Krug winery in St. Helena, California. Sons Robert and Peter go on to raise the profile of California wine far beyond the state's borders, while, farther south in Modesto, the winery founded in 1933 by Ernest and Julio Gallo becomes the world's largest.



1967

Astoria, New York-based Michael Rienzi sells tomatoes from Basilicata. Before long, importers begin marketing San Marzano tomatoes from Campania.



1975

Da Silvano popularizes trattoria fare in downtown New York. Two years later, Dean & DeLuca opens, offering regional specialties like Modena's balsamic vinegar.

BOWL OF GOODNESS

My dad was a plain-clothes cop who worked crazy shifts, but the joke was that he didn't work hard at all because he was always eating at my grandparents' house, which was not far from his precinct on Long Island. He'd put his police radio on their kitchen counter, turn the volume down low enough so that you couldn't hear the high-frequency squeals, and fix himself a bowl of escarole soup. There was always escarole soup at my grandparents' house: My grandfather, who worked as a manager at the Associated grocery store down the block, would often start the soup early in the morning, before he left for work, and by the time Dad would stop by for lunch, the onions and escarole and big, fat, chuck meatballs had turned the broth all sweet and meaty. If the soup wasn't on the stove, it was probably in the refrigerator; he'd sup on it cold, like we did with the leftovers at our own house; like my husband and son and I do at our own house now. We all loved this soup, craved its peppery broth, sneaked its meatballs in the middle of the night, lugged it to the office in harvest gold Tupperware despite the looks it got from co-workers (escarole soup is many things; attractive is not one of them). If I went to Denise Rufolo or Jennifer Faiella's house after school and their mom was serving their version of escarole soup for dinner—with white beans, or with diminutive meatballs made with chicken, or with shards of pasta instead of rice—I would feel bad for my friends. They didn't know what they were missing. —Dana Bowen



Escarole soup (see page 72 for a recipe).



A FRESH TAKE

In 2004, we opened Frankies Spuntino in the Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn, which is traditionally Italian, because we wanted to take back our heritage. We knew that our grandparents made great food, but Italian-American cooking had become gimmicky: You couldn't talk about it without someone bringing up Sinatra and red-and-white checked tablecloths. We were proud of what we learned from our grandparents, and we wanted people to respect this food. It's not a joke. It's pretty brilliant, actually. These foods were Depression-era dishes that were really well thought out: fresh food our ancestors grew in their backyards, prepared simply. There was always fresh pasta; not with eggs, just semolina flour and water. Both of our grandmothers made it this way; if we saw the pasta board out on the table when we went to their houses, we'd know we were in for a treat. They rolled it all out: garganelli, cavatelli, tortellini. Frank C's grandmother didn't have enough space on her kitchen counter, so she'd carry the board, basically just a long piece of plywood, to the bed so the pasta could dry there. Sure, we've updated, and in some ways, lightened up their recipes; our rabbit ragù is made with garganelli we tint green and flavor with tarragon, and we don't stuff our artichokes with breadcrumbs, yet still braise them with lemon and white wine. But we think they embody the best of Italian-American home cooking. —Frank Castronovo and Frank Falcinelli, owners of Frankies restaurants and Prime Meats in New York City

CLASSIC COMBO

Funny thing: While pizza and eggplant parm and zeppole have become trendy menu items these days, so far one of the most beloved food items of Italian-American culture has missed revival. In fact, when I was growing up in the Bronx, sausage and peppers was the abiding cure-all dish, as a main course at night, as a snack to munch on, and as a feast food, served from sheet pans on special occasions. It was carried to construction sites in work pails, taken to ball games wrapped in paper, sold on hulking hero loaves from carts. As far as I know, there isn't an exact provenance for this dish: sausage, peppers, and onions is a popular combination in southern Italy, where bell peppers grow profusely, and so it became popular here. I recently went down to Mike's Deli on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx to bone up on my sausage-and-peppers lore. "In Naples they use the hot fennel sausage with melted mozzarella and tomato sauce," said the deli's owner, David Greco. "North of Naples, no sauce, and they used more sweet sausage." It goes without saying that the most conventional and delicious way to eat the food is in a length of crusty Italian bread. I bit into both versions, wholly undecided as to which was better, but as I sipped a sweet red wine from a glass tumbler, it didn't seem to matter much. I just thought about how I was going to finish both. —John Mariani



Sausage and peppers (see page 73 for a recipe).



Snapshots of Arthur Avenue in the Bronx, New York. From left: men play cards inside the Arthur Avenue Retail Market; a wheel of parmigiano-reggiano cheese at Mike's Deli; diners and servers at Trattoria Zero Otto Nove.



From left: A customer bites into a prosciutto and fresh mozzarella sandwich at Mike's Deli, an Arthur Avenue standby; cured sausages at Teitel Brothers on Arthur Avenue.



From left: butchers at Peter's Meat Market; a customer in front of G. Addeo & Son Bakery's window; sun-dried tomatoes at Teitel Brothers.



Lasagne at Rubirosa in New York City (see page 73 for a recipe).

LAYERS OF HISTORY

Lasagne is one of the crowning glories of the Italian-American table: a many-layered baked dish of pasta, sauce, meat, and molten cheese that comes together as a single, sumptuous whole. It's also one of Italy's oldest recipes: its name stems from the Greek *laganon*, the world's earliest form of pasta; in fact, those ancient sheets of dough went on to inspire the Greek version of lasagne, *pastitsio*. When Italians emigrated to this country, they brought their own ways of making this special-occasion fare: Some added sausage, others ground beef, still others embellishments like hard-boiled eggs and chicken livers. "We always had lasagne for Christmas, and we'd wait all year for it," says Albert di Meglio, the chef at Rubirosa in New York City. "My father would get fresh pasta from the store, and he'd make mini meatballs and layer them between the sheets and sauce." It's a similar style of lasagne to the kind that the family of Rubirosa's owner, Angelo Pappalardo, makes: not surprising considering that both families originally hail from Naples. When the two men started working in high-end New York restaurant kitchens in the 1990s, they made lots of lasagne, none of it the kind they grew up with. "Nowadays, everyone serves the northern Italian style, with spinach pasta and besciamella," Pappalardo says. So when they opened Rubirosa, their families' lasagne went on the menu. It's a glorious thing, served in a casserole sized so that two people can share, with enough for delicious leftovers. —Dana Bowen

(continued from page 65) he also offers meatballs in tomato sauce and pasta with white clams.

Moreover, traditional Italian-American restaurants are opening in higher profile, trendier spots. The 10-table, infamously hard-to-get-into Rao's in New York City opened in Vegas in 2006, serving classics like meatballs and veal chops. And, Rubirosa, owned by the same family that runs the 51-year-old Staten Island pizzeria Joe and Pat's, recently opened in downtown Manhattan, serving the kind of food I grew up on, in a dining room painstakingly designed to evoke the classic midcentury neighborhood red-sauce joint. The chef, Albert Di Meglio, and owner Angelo Pappalardo, both worked at the Manhattan restaurant Circo in the 1990s, owned by Sirio Maccioni, the man responsible for inventing pasta primavera and making it one of the most popular dishes of the 1980s at his celebrated Le Cirque. Rubirosa is returning to the Italian-American classics by serving the likes of sautéed broccoli rabe and stuffed clams.

Perhaps the place offering the most creative take on Italian-American cooking is the widely praised—"aggressively Italian-American," as Sam Sifton, former restaurant critic for *The New York Times* put it—Torrioni Italian Specialties. In a storefront on Mulberry Street, Little Italy's main drag, Mario Carbone and Rich Torrisi typically serve more than 300 Italian-American-style hero sandwiches at lunch, and at the neighborhood's annual San Gennaro festival, they set up a booth hawking mozzarella sticks. But where they really capture Italian-American food's melting pot qualities and spirit of innovation is at dinner. In a dining room decorated with a poster of Billy Joel, fifty bucks gets you five courses, which may include their inspired take on garlic bread, slathered with tomato-garlic butter; bowls of still-warm, made-to-order mozzarella; *gemelli* from Severino, a 40-year-old pasta company in New Jersey,

Chefs are now returning to the classics, preparing them with great skill and finesse

in a hearty duck ragù; maybe tilefish with pickled green tomato relish or duck breast with broccoli rabe and mulberry mustard. The meal ends with a paper cup of Italian ice and a plate of cookies. That was last night; tonight it will all be different.

What's also different is that Carbone and Torrisi, who often incorporate Asian influences from neighboring Chinatown into their menus, use only American products. Nothing's imported, not the prosciutto, not the tomatoes, not the spaghetti, not the bread crumbs—because, what's wrong with Progresso? The message is clear: It doesn't have to be straight from Italia to be special. And if it was good enough for Italian home cooks, then it's good enough for us.

Whenever I eat at these new school, or cheffy, Italian-American restaurants, I never expect the food to taste just like my mother's. These restaurants are a testament to the fact that Italian-American food is its own living, breathing cuisine; that can evolve just like any other. What I love most about where Italian-American cooking is now is that there's an equal respect for the tried and the true, as well as the changing tastes of the day: even at home, the dishes I prepare tend to be lighter, and maybe a bit brighter with fresh herbs, than they used to be. But they still embody all that is genuine, and generously wholesome, about Italian-American food. And they're served with gusto and with just one intention: to make me and my family and friends very, very happy. —John Mariani, author of *How Italian Food Conquered the World* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2011)



1982

The first Olive Garden opens in Orlando, Florida, offering help-yourself bread, oil, and wine. There are now more than 730 locations.



1990-2000

Cooking show hosts, from Lidia Bastianich to Mary Ann Esposito to Mario Batali, popularize regional Italian cooking.



2006

The International Culinary Center launches the School of Italian Studies offering classes in New York and Italy.



2010

Lidia Bastianich, her son Joe Bastianich, and Mario Batali open America's first Eataly, a 50,000-square-foot mega-market featuring six restaurants and thousands of Italian cheeses, salumi, wines, sweets, and more—paradise for Italophiles. —Rina Oh

Baccala Salad

SERVES 8

This refreshing salt cod salad (pictured on page 59) is a staple Italian-American Christmas Eve dish.

- 2 lb. salt cod
- 2 cups roughly chopped jarred sweet pimiento peppers
- 1 cup roughly chopped pitted kalamata olives
- 1 cup roughly chopped parsley
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 tbsp. capers, rinsed
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 ribs celery, finely chopped
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 medium head escarole, cored and leaves separated

Place cod in a 2-qt. saucepan, and cover by 2" with cold water; boil for 20 minutes. Drain, return cod to saucepan, and repeat process twice. Drain, and cut into 1" chunks; transfer to a bowl and toss with peppers, olives, parsley, oil, capers, black pepper, chile flakes, garlic, celery, juice, and salt; chill for 2 hours. Arrange escarole on a serving platter; top with salt cod salad.

Braised Artichokes

SERVES 6-12

Earthy and tender, these artichokes (pictured on page 67) are a favorite antipasto at Frankies Spuntino restaurants in New York City.

- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ cup white wine
- 4 large artichokes, outer leaves trimmed, and halved lengthwise
- 3 lemons, halved and juiced
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic; cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add wine, artichokes, lemon juice and spent halves of the lemons, salt, and 10 cups water; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until artichokes are very tender, about 30 minutes. Transfer artichokes to a serving platter and keep warm. Discard all but 2 cups cooking liquid; return pan with liquid to medium-high heat. Add butter; cook until sauce is thickened, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; spoon

sauce over artichokes to serve.

Calamari with Potatoes and Peas

SERVES 6-8

SAVEUR kitchen assistant Alex Saggiomo shared his family's recipe for this delicious dish, served for the Feast of the Seven Fishes.

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small yellow onion, minced
- 1 medium carrot, minced
- 1 rib celery, minced
- 3 tbsp. red wine
- 2 28-oz. cans whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 lb. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 1 lb. cleaned calamari, bodies cut into ¾"-wide rings
- 1½ cups frozen peas
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add oregano, garlic, onion, carrot, and celery; cook until soft, about 10 minutes. Add wine; cook until evaporated, about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, bay leaf, and 2 cups water; boil. Reduce heat to low; cook until slightly reduced, about 30 minutes. Stir in potatoes; cook until potatoes begin to break down in sauce, about 30 minutes. Stir in calamari and peas; cook until calamari is tender, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Chicken Vesuvio

SERVES 8

This garlicky chicken dish (pictured on page 56) is a specialty of Chicago's Italian-American restaurants.

- 1 cup olive oil
- 10 cloves garlic
- 4 large russet potatoes, peeled and quartered lengthwise
- 2 3-4-lb. whole chickens, each cut into 8 pieces
- 1½ cups white wine
- ½ cup finely chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1½ cups chicken stock
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed

Heat oven to 375°. Heat oil in a roasting pan set over two burners over medium-high heat. Add garlic and potatoes; cook, turning, until potatoes are golden brown, about 45 minutes. Transfer potatoes and garlic to a plate; set aside. Add

chicken to pan; cook, turning once, until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Add wine; cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Return potatoes and garlic to pan; season with parsley, oregano, salt, and pepper. Add stock; transfer pan to oven. Bake, sprinkling peas over chicken in the last 5 minutes of cooking, until cooked through, about 45 minutes.

Cioppino

SERVES 4-6

This hearty version of San Francisco's signature seafood soup (pictured on page 63) comes from Sotto Mare in North Beach.

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 cups fish stock
- 1½ cups whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 10 leaves basil
- 1 lb. cod, cut into 2" chunks
- 1 lb. cleaned calamari, bodies cut into ½"-wide rings
- 12 oz. medium shrimp, deveined
- 12 oz. bay scallops
- 16 clams, cleaned
- 16 mussels, cleaned
- 2 2-lb. Dungeness crabs or snow crab legs, halved
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat oil in an 8-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add chile flakes and garlic; cook until soft, about 3 minutes. Add stock, tomatoes, and basil; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Add cod, calamari, shrimp, scallops, clams, mussels, and crabs, cover with lid, and cook until seafood is cooked through, about 8 minutes; season with salt and pepper.

Escarole Soup

SERVES 8-10

Escarole lends sweet depth to this comforting soup (pictured on page 66) from SAVEUR executive editor Dana Bowen.

- 1 lb. ground beef
- ½ cup seasoned bread crumbs
- ½ cup grated parmesan, plus more
- ½ cup grated pecorino
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced, plus 1, minced
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced, plus 1, minced
- 1 small bunch parsley, minced
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 2 large heads escarole, cored and cut into 2" pieces
- 8 cups chicken stock
- Cooked white rice, for serving

1 Mix beef, bread crumbs, parmesan, pecorino, ¼ cup oil, seasoning, minced garlic and onion, parsley, egg, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Form into 30, 1½" meatballs; chill.

2 Heat remaining oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add sliced garlic and onions; cook until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Add escarole; cook until wilted, about 6 minutes. Add stock; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add meatballs; cook until meatballs are cooked through, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve over rice; top with more parmesan and black pepper.

Johnny Marzetti

SERVES 6

The bygone restaurant Marzetti's in Columbus, Ohio, invented this cheesy noodle casserole (pictured on page 56).

- 10 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 medium yellow onions, roughly chopped
- 8 oz. white button mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1½ lb. ground beef
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 10 oz. wide egg noodles
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 8 oz. cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3 oz. mozzarella, shredded
- 3 tbsp. bread crumbs

1 Heat 3 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onions; cook until soft, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Return skillet to heat with 3 tbsp. oil; add mushrooms; cook until browned, about 5 minutes. Add to bowl with onions; return skillet to heat with 2 tbsp. oil. Add beef; cook until browned, about 8 minutes. Return onions and mushrooms to skillet along with oregano and tomatoes; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until thickened, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat, season with salt and pepper, and stir in parsley; let sauce cool.

2 Heat oven to 325°. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat, and add noodles; cook until al dente, about 7 minutes. Drain and toss with butter in a bowl; set aside. Spread 2 cups sauce on bottom of a 9" x 13" baking dish; cover with noodles. Spread $\frac{3}{4}$ cheddar over noodles; top with remaining sauce. Sprinkle remaining cheddar, mozzarella, and breadcrumbs over sauce; drizzle with remaining oil. Bake until browned on top, about 25 minutes.

Lasagne

SERVES 8-10

This hearty lasagne (pictured on page 70) from Rubirosa in New York City is made with sweet fennel sausage and tiny meatballs.

For the sauce:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ lb. sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 2 ribs celery, minced
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 1 medium carrot, minced
- 1 cup red wine
- 2 28-oz. cans whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the meatballs:

- 5 oz. each ground beef, veal, and pork
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup seasoned Italian breadcrumbs
- 5 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 3 tbsp. finely grated pecorino
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 slices country white bread, soaked in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, drained, squeezed dry
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small yellow onion, minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the lasagne:

- 2 cups whole-milk ricotta
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1½ cups finely grated parmesan
- 8 oz. lasagna noodles, cooked

1 To make the sauce: heat oil in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add sausage; cook, stirring to break up large pieces, until browned, about 6 minutes; drain off fat. Add celery, large onion, and carrot; cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add wine; cook until reduced by half, about 7 minutes. Add tomatoes and bay leaves, reduce heat to medium; cook until reduced and thick, about 1 hour. Season with salt and pepper;

set aside.

2 To make the meatballs: mix beef, veal, pork, breadcrumbs, 2 tbsp. parsley, pecorino, garlic, white bread, eggs, onion, and salt and pepper in a bowl; form into about 60, $\frac{1}{2}$ " meatballs. Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat; working in batches, add meatballs, and cook until browned all over, about 8 minutes. Set aside.

3 To make the lasagne: Heat oven to 350°. Mix ricotta, mozzarella, and parmesan in a bowl; set aside. Spread $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sauce in bottom of a 9" x 13" baking dish; top with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the noodles. Top with $\frac{1}{4}$ remaining sauce, followed by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cheeses; spread meatballs evenly over cheeses. Top with half remaining noodles; add half remaining sauce and half remaining cheese. Add remaining noodles, sauce, and then cheeses; bake until bubbly and browned on top, about 50 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining parsley.

Lobster Fra Diavolo

(Lobster in Spicy Tomato Sauce)

SERVES 6-8

SAVEUR kitchen assistant Victoria Cannizzo's cousin Catherine Arturi Seco gave us the recipe for this spicy seafood pasta (pictured on page 59).

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 1½-lb. lobsters, cleaned, tails cut into 6 pieces, claws cracked open, bodies reserved
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
- 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cognac or brandy
- 1 cup seafood or fish stock
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 lb. bucatini pasta, cooked
- 1 tbsp. chopped parsley

Heat oil in an 8-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Toss lobster pieces in flour, shake off excess, and add to pot; cook until shells turn red, about 6 minutes. Transfer lobster pieces to a plate; set aside. Add chile flakes, oregano, and garlic to pot; cook until lightly toasted, about 3 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook until lightly caramelized, about 2 minutes. Add cognac; cook until almost evaporated, about 2 min-

utes. Add stock, tomatoes, and bay leaf; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, partially covered, until thickened, about 30 minutes. Return lobster to pot; cook until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add pasta; toss with sauce. Transfer to a large serving platter; sprinkle with parsley.

Pasta con le Sarde

(Pasta with Sardines)

SERVES 4-6

Many Sicilian-Americans serve this dish, laced with golden raisins and fennel, on Christmas Eve.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. dried oregano
- 4 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced, plus $\frac{1}{2}$, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. tomato paste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 3 leaves basil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 large bulb fennel, thinly sliced
- 1½ lb. fresh sardines, filleted and chopped
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 4 anchovies, finely chopped
- 1 cup golden raisins, soaked for 30 minutes, drained
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. crushed saffron, soaked in 1 tbsp. warm water
- 1 lb. spaghetti, cooked
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley

1 Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add oregano, $\frac{1}{2}$ minced onion, and garlic; cook until soft, about 6 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook until caramelized, about 2 minutes. Add tomatoes; cook until reduced, about 30 minutes. Stir in basil and season with salt and pepper; set sauce aside.

2 Bring a 4-qt. saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add fennel; cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain; set aside. Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Toss sardines in flour; add to skillet. Cook until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Add remaining oil, sliced onions, reserved fennel, and anchovies; cook until very soft, about 14 minutes. Add reserved sauce, raisins, pine nuts, and saffron water; cook to blend flavors, about 10 minutes. Add pasta; toss with sardine sauce. Transfer to a large serving platter; sprinkle with parsley.

Rabbit Ragù with Garganelli

SERVES 8-10

This flavorful ragù (pictured on page 67) is served with fresh tarragon-flavored garganelli at Frankies Spuntino restaurant in Brooklyn, New York, but is delicious with any kind of pasta.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
- 2 2-2½-lb. rabbits, cut into quarters
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 medium yellow onions, roughly chopped
- 2 medium carrots, roughly chopped
- 2 ribs celery, roughly chopped
- 1 large turnip, peeled and roughly chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tomato paste
- 2 cups red wine
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 tbsp. dried sage
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 2 lb. spinach garganelli or penne pasta, cooked
- 2 tbsp. minced parsley
- 2 tbsp. minced tarragon

1 Heat oven to 350°. Heat oil in an 8-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season rabbit with salt and pepper, and add to pot; cook, turning once, until browned on both sides, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a plate; set aside. Add garlic, onions, carrots, celery, and turnip to pot; cook until caramelized, about 20 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook until caramelized, about 2 minutes. Add wine; cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Return rabbit to pot along with stock, sage, thyme, bay leaves, and tomatoes; cover with lid. Transfer to oven; braise until meat falls off the bone, about 1½ to 2 hours.

2 Remove rabbit from pot, shred meat off bones, and discard bones; return meat to pot and season with salt and pepper. Serve ragù over garganelli; sprinkle with herbs.

Sausage and Peppers

SERVES 4-6

Sweet, fennel seed-flecked sausage marries beautifully with bell peppers when cooked with garlic, chile flakes, and oregano (pictured on page 68).

- 1½ lb. sweet Italian sausages

- 6 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½" strips
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½" strips
- ½ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup chicken stock
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley

Bring sausages, 3 tbsp. oil, and ½ cup water to a boil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat; cover, and simmer until sausages are half-cooked, about 8 minutes. Uncover and cook, turning, until sausages are browned all over, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and cut into 4 pieces each; set aside. Return skillet to heat along with remaining oil. Add onions and bell peppers; cook until soft, about 6 minutes. Add chile flakes and garlic; cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Return sausages to skillet along with stock, oregano, and salt and pepper; boil. Cover and cook until sausages are cooked through, about 10 minutes; uncover and cook until sauce is slightly reduced, about 4 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley.

Sautéed Sole with Olives

SERVES 8

This dish (pictured on page 59), whose topping resembles a tapenade, is wonderful served alongside roast potatoes.

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup pitted kalamata olives
- ¼ cup pitted green olives
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped garlic
- 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. capers, rinsed
- 2 anchovy filets
- 1 tomato, cored and chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 8 4-oz. fillets sole or flounder

Combine 2 tbsp. oil, olives, parsley, garlic, vinegar, capers, anchovies, tomato, and salt and pepper in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped; set tapenade aside. Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add sole; cook, turning once, until golden brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Top each fillet with tapenade before serving.

Shrimp Scampi

SERVES 4

This simple, delicious seafood pasta (pictured on page 59) is a staple of Italian-American restaurants.

- 5 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled, deveined, tails attached
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- ½ cup white wine
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 1 lb. thin spaghetti, cooked
- ¼ cup roughly chopped parsley

Heat 3 tbsp. butter and oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat; season shrimp with salt and pepper, and add to skillet. Cook, turning once, until beginning to turn pink, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate; set aside. Add chile flakes, garlic, and shallots to skillet; cook until soft, about 3 minutes. Add wine, juice, and zest; cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add pasta, reserved shrimp and remaining butter; toss until evenly combined. Transfer to a serving platter; sprinkle with parsley.

Spaghetti and Meatballs

SERVES 8

Lou Di Palo shared his grandmother's recipe for the meatballs (pictured on 55) that he sells at his family's store, Di Palo's Fine Foods, in New York City.

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. dried parsley
- 1 tbsp. dried basil
- 2 28-oz. cans whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup sugar
- 10 oz. ground pork
- 5 oz. ground beef chuck
- 5 oz. ground veal
- ½ cup shredded provolone
- ½ cup whole-milk ricotta
- ¼ cup finely grated parmesan
- ¼ cup finely grated pecorino, plus more for serving
- ¾ cup breadcrumbs
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 lb. spaghetti, cooked
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley, for serving

Heat 2 tbsp. oil and 3 cloves garlic in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium heat; cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add dried parsley, basil, tomatoes, salt, and pepper; cook for

60 minutes. Add sugar; cook until reduced and thick, about 20 minutes. Mix remaining garlic, pork, chuck, veal, provolone, ricotta, parmesan, pecorino, breadcrumbs, eggs, salt, and pepper in a bowl; form into eight 2½" meatballs, about 6 oz. each. Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add meatballs; cook, turning, until browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer to sauce; cook until cooked through, about 30 minutes. Serve meatballs and sauce over spaghetti; sprinkle with parsley.

Stuffed Calamari

SERVES 6-8

This flavorful dish (pictured on page 59) is a Feast of the Seven Fishes favorite.

- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp. olive oil
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ small yellow onion, minced
- 2 tsp. tomato paste
- 4 tbsp. red wine
- ½ 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- cleaned calamari
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1 cup finely grated pecorino
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped oregano

1 Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add dried oregano, garlic, and onions; cook until soft, about 6 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook until caramelized, about 2 minutes. Add 3 tbsp. wine, tomatoes, and bay leaf; reduce heat to medium-low, and cook until thickened, about 20 minutes. Stir in remaining wine and vinegar; season with salt and pepper. Set sauce aside.

2 Heat oven to 350°. Heat remaining oil in a 10" skillet over medium heat. Chop tentacles and add to skillet; cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in breadcrumbs, pecorino, parsley, and oregano. Season with salt and pepper. Stuff each calamari body half full with bread crumb mixture; place in a 9" x 13" baking dish. Pour sauce over calamari; bake until warmed through, about 30 minutes.

Utica Greens

SERVES 6-8

With roasted potatoes and spicy peppers, this specialty of Utica, New York, makes for a full-flavored side dish (pictured on page 56).

- ½ cup plus 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 large russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 4 slices prosciutto
- ¼ cup toasted bread crumbs
- ¼ cup finely grated parmesan
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 medium heads, escarole, cored, and roughly chopped
- 5 pickled hot cherry peppers, drained and thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 Heat oven to 400°. Toss 1 tbsp. oil and potatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet; bake until golden brown, about 35 minutes. Set aside.

2 Meanwhile, heat ¼ cup oil in a 12" high-sided skillet over medium-high heat. Add prosciutto; cook until crisp, about 3 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to cool, roughly chop, and set aside. Pour oil from skillet into a bowl; stir in bread crumbs and parmesan; set aside. Return skillet to heat with remaining oil. Add garlic; cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add escarole; cook until wilted, about 8 minutes. Stir in potatoes and peppers; season with salt and pepper. Spread breadcrumb mixture evenly over top; transfer skillet to oven and bake until golden brown on top, about 12 minutes. Sprinkle with prosciutto before serving.

Whole Roasted Branzino with Fennel and Onions

SERVES 8-10

Whole roasted fish dishes like this flavorful one (pictured on page 59) are traditionally served on Italian-American feast days.

- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 lb. yellow onions, sliced
- 3 lb. fennel, sliced, fronds reserved
- ¼ cup white wine
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped thyme
- Zest and juice of 1 orange
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 2-lb. whole branzino, cleaned

Heat oven to 350°. Heat ½ cup oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and fennel; cook until soft, 8-10 minutes. Add fronds, wine, thyme, and zest and juice; cook for 5 minutes. Season fish with salt and pepper; stuff cavity with ¼ cup fennel mixture; tie fish closed with kitchen twine. Put remaining fennel mixture in a roasting pan; top with fish. Drizzle with remaining oil; bake until cooked through, about 30 minutes.

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ROMEO

JULIET



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NO BIRD
MAKES SUCH
A SPLENDID
CENTERPIECE
FOR THE
HOLIDAY
FEAST





G

OD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!" IS THE FAMOUS benediction that Tiny Tim Cratchit pronounces over what is perhaps the most famous holiday meal of all time, in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. On the Cratchit family's holiday table are potatoes, gravy, applesauce, a pudding "like a speckled cannon-ball" blazing with ignited brandy. But at the center of the meal—and the heart of Tiny Tim's prayer—is a glorious roast goose.

That goose has always stuck with me, and no wonder: It moved Dickens to a culinary rapture unparalleled in the thousands of pages he wrote. The Cratchits rush to take their places at the table with their spoons crammed in their mouths "lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped." The family says grace, and a breathless pause ensues as Mrs. Cratchit prepares to plunge the carving knife into the goose. "Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavor, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by the applesauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet everyone had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits, in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows!"

There's lots to love in this passage: the atom of leftover bone, the children sauced in sage and onion. But what's always most delighted me is the vision of the little Cratchits politely sucking their spoons so as not to clamor out of turn for their helping of goose.

Certainly that was the feeling in our family when, a few years ago, we cooked our first Christmas goose. Without the sense to put our spoons in our mouths, we relied on some notion of civilized behavior to keep from yelping and scrambling as my husband took the goose out of the oven, carved it while we hungrily watched, and brought it to the table.

In our extended family, which now includes two grown sons, spouses, grandchildren, relatives, and friends, we've cooked dozens of holiday turkeys. I say we, but my husband is the cook; my job is to page through the *Joy of Cooking* for its ruling, which we can never recall, on how many minutes per pound it needs to cook. But though our kitchen has produced some truly gorgeous, glistening, and flavorful birds, none of them has sparked quite the excitement that greeted that platter of goose.

Attracted by the challenge, the novelty, and—to be honest—a certain competitiveness with a friend who had boasted about his success in roasting a goose, we decided to try it. We also knew that it would mean lots of flavorful goose fat left over for roasting vegetables, baking, and making luscious confit. The prospect sent my husband, a skilled and effortlessly confident home cook, to consult several cookbooks and the Internet. His hesitation stemmed partly from the fact that we'd had to special-order the goose. And we were definitely not exulting, as Bob Cratchit had, in its cheapness. Even at our enlightened, reasonable, noncorporate local supermarket, the sticker shock had inspired one of those what-the-heck-it's-the-holidays moments of giddy abandon. On principle, you don't want to screw up an expensive 12-pound bird you've personally had to ask the butcher for—especially when it's the main course at the family holiday dinner.

Far more daunting was the rumor that cooking a goose is tricky. What you hear is that it requires

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by FRANCINE PROSE

photographs by

TODD COLEMAN

Clockwise, from top left: rosemary popovers enriched with goose fat; goose liver terrine; goose confit and fig salad; turnips with candied bacon, cooked in goose fat. Previous page: Christmas goose with stuffing at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. (See page 82 for recipes.)

FRANCINE PROSE's most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "Dreamy Good" (April 2011).



hard work, mostly because it's so fatty, and the grease must be closely monitored and frequently siphoned off to avoid ruining the bird—and the oven. Several of the cookbooks from which my husband read aloud were not only unhelpful but positively alarming as they warned us about the challenge of getting the legs to come out done and the breast still moist.

As it turned out, cooking the goose wasn't difficult so much as it was demanding. Unless you have a squad of professional helpers rushing to mop every spatter, it does require the sort of organization and concentration involved in, say, canning tomatoes. But that is only if you care about the yummy goose fat winding up in jars rather than on the kitchen floor.

My husband stuffed the goose with an onion, an apple, and a lemon to draw out what one cookbook referred to as the “off” flavors. He tied up the bird and pricked holes in the skin with a curved needle, careful not to cut into the flesh. Then he placed the goose on a rack in the oven and kept turning it from side to side as it roasted, frequently draining off the fat, which he ultimately strained and poured into a jar. When the skin was crisp and the meat thermometer had registered 160 degrees, he declared it ready.

In the end, our goose was spectacular—astonishingly delicious! We all agreed with Bob Cratchit: We didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Juicy, moist, delicately gamey, richer by far than any turkey; every mouthful reminded us that we were eating something special. Golden, crisp-skinned, with no signs of a struggle for doneness and tastiness among its various body parts, our goose was not only a thing of beauty, but of power. It had earned not merely our love but also our respect.

Would I have felt so strongly if I hadn't known something about the simultaneously humble and exalted role that the goose has played in food history? Its history as a feast dish, for Christmas and other celebrations, dates back to ancient times. Among French and German Jewish communities, beginning in the early Middle Ages, geese were fattened through the autumn and butchered around the time of Hanukkah, before the coming of winter. The Pilgrims brought the domesticated goose to this country, where it was a popular holiday dish until the 19th century, when it was gradually supplanted by the turkey, a bird now farmed on an industrial scale as the goose never has been.

Would I have enjoyed our goose more had I not known that, throughout much of Western Europe, the traditional Christmas goose had once been the traditional Michaelmas goose, served at the end of September, on the feast day of the Archangel Michael? That its timing in the culinary calendar had been moved from the autumn equinox to the winter solstice to better assert its symbolic promise that the seasons are turning and the darkest days are over? Would I have been as delighted if I hadn't known that the goose was, historically, not only a source of nourishment and pleasure but also of consolation and hope?

I wish I could pretend that I thought about any of this as I ate the goose. In fact I was too focused on how scrumptious (and not greasy!) it was. But later, clearing the dishes and standing at the sink, I reflected on the meaning of tradition and of traditional food. I thought about how tradition can transcend one's personal life and the circle of one's immediate family, how a culinary heritage can tie us to history and to literature, and to the lives and the feasts that came before us.

As I put away the goose stock for a soup that would last until the end of the week; as I collected the scraps for the goose mole tacos we would have the next day; and for weeks afterward, as we ate potatoes, root vegetables, peppers, onions, and even eggs fried in goose fat, I heard, in my mind, the echo of Tiny Tim's brave and grateful voice, moved to prayer by a roast goose. God bless us, every one. 🦃

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Ronny Brizen serves a Christmas goose (see page 82 for a recipe) at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

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Christmas Goose with Stuffing

SERVES 8

This recipe for roast goose (pictured on page 76), along with all the recipes on this page, comes from executive chef Brian Alberg of the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

FOR THE STUFFING:

- 8 oz. bacon, cut into ½" cubes
- 8 oz. Brussels sprouts, quartered
- 2 cups minced celery
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 1 lb. cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped
- 4½ oz. country white bread, cut into ½" cubes (about 4 cups)
- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- ½ cup finely chopped parsley
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped thyme
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped sage
- 2 tart apples, chopped
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper, to taste

FOR THE GOOSE AND GRAVY:

- 1 12-lb. goose, wing tips, neck, and giblets reserved
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 lemon, halved
- 8 sprigs thyme
- 4 sprigs sage
- 8 cups chicken stock
- 2 ribs celery, roughly chopped
- 2 small yellow onions, chopped
- 1 large carrot, roughly chopped
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 oz. baby carrots, peeled
- 1 lb. baby beets, peeled
- 1 lb. small potatoes, halved
- 6 cipolline onions, peeled
- 2 large parsnips, peeled and cut diagonally into 1" slices
- 1 celery root, peeled, halved, and cut into 1" slices
- 1 head garlic, cloves peeled
- 1 sprig rosemary
- ¼ cup flour

1 Make the stuffing: Render bacon in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat for 10 minutes. Add sprouts, celery, and onion; cook until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in chestnuts, bread, rice, stock, butter, parsley, thyme, sage, and apples; season with salt and pepper; set aside.

2 Roast the goose: Prick skin all over with a fork; season with salt and pepper; squeeze lemon juice over skin. Place spent lemon halves in cavity along with 3 sprigs each thyme

and sage. Place goose on a rack in a roasting pan; heat pan on stove over high heat. Add stock; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover with foil, and steam (to render goose fat) for 1 hour. Discard lemon and herbs. Heat oven to 325°. Uncover goose; remove it with rack. Pour pan liquid into a measuring cup; let sit until fat rises to top. Skim off fat; reserve for another use. Add 2 cups pan liquid to roasting pan along with celery, onion, and large carrot; reserve remaining pan liquid. Return goose and rack to pan. Stuff goose with some of the stuffing (place remaining stuffing in a buttered casserole; heat alongside goose the last 15 minutes of cooking); tie legs together with kitchen twine. Place goose breast side down; cover with foil. Roast for 1 hour.

3 Begin the gravy: Heat butter in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; add wing tips, neck, giblets, and 2 sprigs thyme; cook until browned, about 15 minutes. Add reserved pan liquid; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until reduced by half, about 1 hour. Strain goose stock; set aside.

4 Increase oven temperature to 475°. Uncover goose; turn breast side up. Roast until golden and temperature of stuffing is 180°, about 70 minutes.

5 Meanwhile, roast the vegetables: Toss remaining thyme and sage, oil, carrots, beets, potatoes, onions, parsnips, celery root, garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper on two baking sheets. Roast, stirring, until golden brown, about 45 minutes; keep warm.

6 Transfer goose to a cutting board; let rest for 15 minutes. Strain pan liquid into a measuring cup; let sit until fat rises to top. Skim off fat (about ¼ cup), and return to pan with the celery, onion, and carrot. Heat over medium-high heat; brown vegetables for 8 minutes. Add flour; cook for 4 minutes. Add strained pan juices and goose stock; boil. Cook until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. Strain gravy; season with salt and pepper. Remove stuffing from goose; carve goose. Serve with gravy and roasted vegetables on the side.

Pairing Note: For this rich dish, try a red that balances full fruit with acid, like Amayna Pinot Noir 2008 (\$26).

Goose Confit and Fig Salad

SERVES 8

This salad (pictured on page 79) is adorned with goose leg meat braised

in goose fat to make a luscious confit.

- 4 whole goose legs
- 3 tbsp. kosher salt
- 6 sprigs thyme, stems removed
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large shallot, thinly sliced
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 cups rendered goose fat (see page 104)
- 10 oz. arugula
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 8 black mission figs, quartered

Rub legs with salt, thyme, garlic, shallot, and pepper in a 6-qt. baking dish; cover and chill 12 hours. Heat oven to 225°. Rinse legs and dry; return to dish. Pour fat over legs; bake until very tender, about 5 hours; cool. Remove legs from fat; discard skin and bones from legs. Shred meat; toss with arugula, oil, vinegar, figs, and pepper.

Goose Liver Terrines

SERVES 6

A tart Concord grape gelée offsets the richness of these goose liver terrines (pictured on page 79).

- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 3 sprigs thyme, stems removed
- 1 lb. goose livers, cleaned (see page 104)
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 3½ tsp. powdered gelatin
- 3 cups Concord grape juice
- Whole-grain mustard and rye crackers, for serving

Heat oven to 300°. Heat 1 tbsp. butter in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallot and garlic; cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add stock and thyme; cook until reduced by half, about 4 minutes. Purée in a food processor with remaining butter, livers, cream, and salt; strain. Pour into six 6-oz. ramekins set in a roasting pan; pour boiling water in pan to come halfway up sides of ramekins. Bake until set, about 18 minutes. Soak gelatin and ¼ cup juice in a bowl. Bring remaining juice to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan; cook until reduced by half, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in gelatin. Pour juice evenly over ramekins; chill until set, about 4 hours. Serve with mustard and crackers.

Pairing Note: An earthy yet bright white like Carballo Listán Blanco 2008 (\$19) goes well with this dish.

Rosemary Popovers

MAKES 12 POPOVERS

Goose fat enriches these savory popovers (pictured on page 79).

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1½ tbsp. minced rosemary
- 1½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ¾ cup rendered goose fat (see page 104)

Heat oven to 400°. Whisk flour, milk, rosemary, salt, pepper, and eggs in a bowl. Place 1 tbsp. fat into each of 12 cups of a muffin pan; heat in oven for 20 minutes. Pour 3 tbsp. batter into each cup; bake until puffed and golden brown, about 30 minutes.

Turnips with Candied Bacon

SERVES 4

Bacon and charred tomatoes bring smoky sweetness to turnips cooked in goose fat (pictured on page 79).

- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 8 slices thick-cut bacon
- 3 lb. plum tomatoes, cored
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2½ cups chicken stock
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 large shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 cup packed basil leaves
- 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup rendered goose fat (see page 104)
- 2 lb. turnips, peeled and cut into 1½" chunks
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4 sprigs thyme

1 Heat oven to 425°. Sprinkle sugar over bacon on a baking sheet; bake until crisp and glazed, about 16 minutes. Cool, cut into 1" pieces, and set aside. Heat oven to broil. Broil tomatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet until charred all over, about 20 minutes. Heat oil in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Add tomatoes, ½ cup stock, garlic, and shallots; cook until tomatoes break down, about 10 minutes. Purée with basil, Worcestershire, salt, and pepper; set aside.

2 Heat fat in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add turnips; cook until starting to soften, about 20 minutes. Add remaining stock, garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered, until tender, about 20 minutes. Serve turnips atop tomato sauce and garnished with bacon.

SAVOR YOUR HOLIDAYS IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS



THE WARMTH OF THE HOLIDAYS takes on another dimension when you spend them in the British Virgin Islands. Whether you want to unwrap gifts or enjoy a time-out on a wrap-around veranda, you'll find a number of ways to get into the holiday spirit here.

Christmas is observed throughout the main islands, with the most well-known festivals in Road Town (Tortola) and Spanish Town (Virgin Gorda) happening December 2 and 3. But expect a Caribbean-style celebration with "Fishing Rod Trees," the tall native succulent plants that are painted silver and decorated, and bustling streets with reggae and calypso musicians serenading last-minute shoppers. And, forget the eggnog—spiced Guavaberry rum is the real holiday spirit!

Then there are the lights: inlets and shores agleam with lanterns from bobbing catamarans and yachts. From Virgin Gorda's North Sound to the Great Harbor in Jost Van Dyke, visitors anticipate New Year's celebrations. First, there's the Trellis Bay "Fireball Full Moon Party" on Beef Island (December 10), a family-friendly fete with a BBQ buffet, steel drums, flaming fireballs and stilt walkers. Then there's the legendary Foxy's "Old Year's Night Celebration" in Great Harbor where headliners and local bands provide non-stop music from dusk till dawn.

And there's plenty of feasting, too, thanks to inventive BVI chefs who turn the holidays into a delicious showcase of innovative cuisine.

At Treasure Isle Hotel, Executive Chef Kenneth Molyneaux (*pictured at right*) brings his international experience and a playful palate to the party. He's not only a master at the grill, but a perfectionist in the kitchen, arriving at the perfect combination of sweet, savory and spicy that's the hallmark of Caribbean cuisine. Trained with some of the BVI's finest chefs, and in his mother's Caribbean kitchen—the multi-award-winning Chef Ken is one of the brightest stars of BVI's emerging culinary scene.

At the Bitter End Yacht Club on Virgin Gorda, Chef Jason Dalmida, Jr., member of the gold medal-winning Caribbean Culinary Team of the Year, is at the helm for the holidays. Chef Jason goes all out on Christmas Day and Old Year's at the spectacular Almond Walk, a waterside dining venue at Bitter End Yacht Club, where you can ring in the New Year in barefoot elegance.

British Virgin Islands

Caribbean Black Cake

3 lbs. dark seedless raisins
1 lb. mixed candied fruit
2 lbs. red candied cherries
2 lbs. currants
1 bottle brandy
1 bottle manischewitz wine
5 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1 tbsp. gravy browning
2 tsp. almond essence
1 tbsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 cup crisco without transfat
2 cups brown sugar
6 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla essence
½ cup butter

method:

Grind raisins and mixed candied fruits then place in a large container. Next add cherries, cut in two, and currants. Pour bottle of brandy and ½ bottle of wine over fruit, cover, then let soak. Sift flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda and spices together. Cream fats and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time. Mix in dry ingredients along with gravy browning and essence. Fold in fruit mixture and blend. Pour into greased pans and line with greaseproof paper, then grease a second time.

Bake at 250°. Wet cakes with wine immediately after removal from oven. Cool thoroughly.



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ISLAND HOLIDAY

**IN PUERTO RICO,
CHRISTMASTIME
BRINGS A SERIES OF
JOYOUS, SATISFYING
FEASTS**

BY KATHLEEN SQUIRES

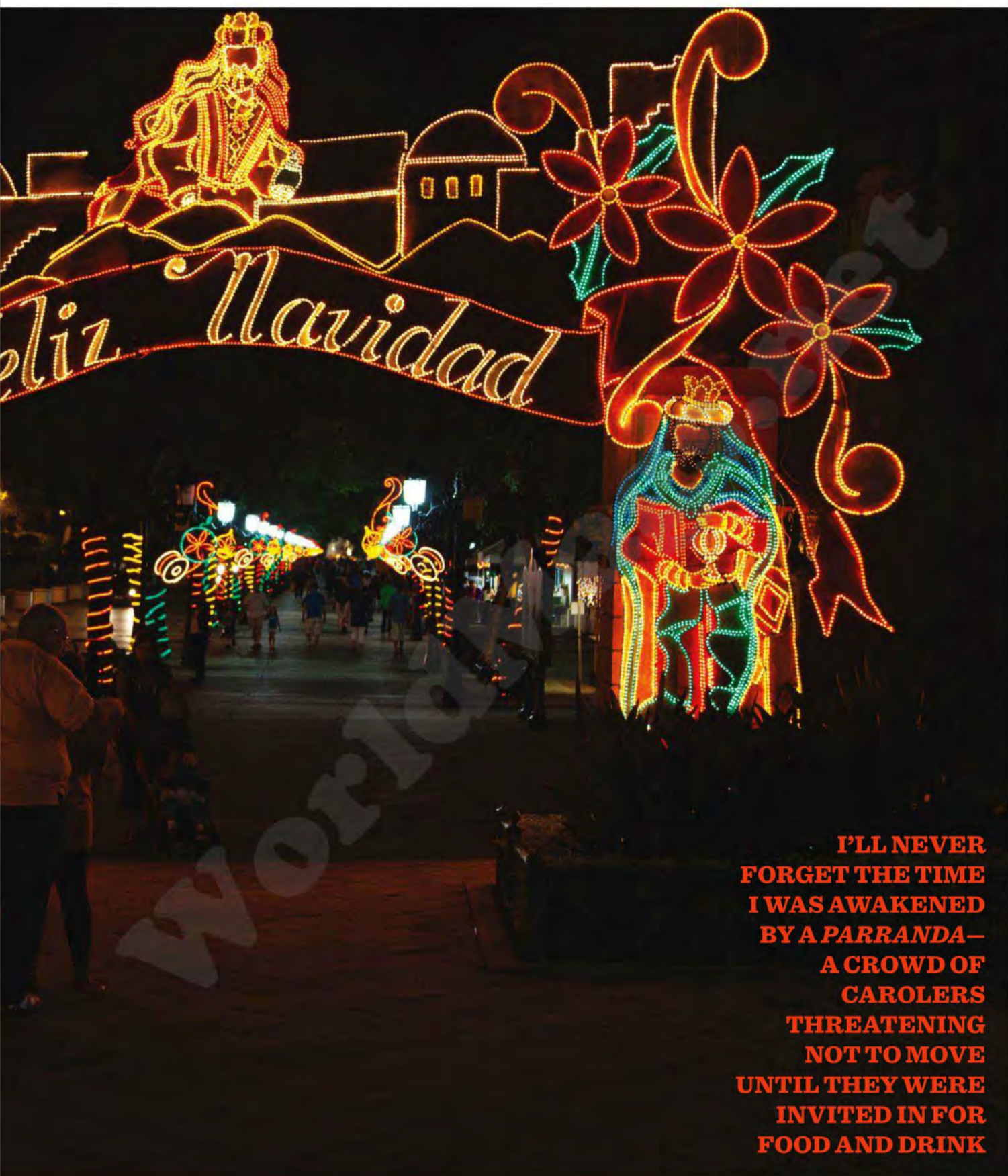
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

At a food stand in Luquillo Beach just east of San Juan, a vendor chooses among assorted *frituras*, traditional fried finger foods.





Clockwise, from top left: spit-roasted pork with boiled yucca; Old San Juan's Plaza de Armas; Puerto Rican eggnog; relatives of the author Carolina Nevares, Roxana Matienzo, and Victor Monserrate making filling for green banana and pork tamales (see recipes on pages 96 and 98).



**I'LL NEVER
FORGET THE TIME
I WAS AWAKENED
BY A PARRANDA—
A CROWD OF
CAROLERS
THREATENING
NOT TO MOVE
UNTIL THEY WERE
INVITED IN FOR
FOOD AND DRINK**



Pasteles, green banana and pork tamales wrapped in banana leaf, are a Puerto Rican holiday specialty. (See a recipe on page 98.)

G

ROWING UP IN New Jersey, Christmas always meant snow, cozy fireplaces, chestnuts, and Santa Claus. But my idea of the holidays changed in 1990, the first year I spent them with my then boyfriend, Ronnie Rodriguez, and his family at their home in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I was 23 years old, sunburned,

mosquito-bitten, and feeling out of place at their annual Christmas Eve celebration, called Nochebuena. I remember trying to identify all of the dishes on the sprawling buffet: yellow rice with brownish-green pigeon peas; platters of glistening roast pork and black-as-night blood sausage studded with rice; bowls filled with round and oblong fritters. As I placed a small banana leaf bundle on my plate, I heard whispers coming from Ronnie's great aunts, Rosita and Goyin. "Mira! She's eating our food!" said Goyin, who had years of experience with her own sons' *gringa* girlfriends and their skittish ways at the table. "Do you think she knows what pasteles are?" wondered Rosita aloud.

I had no idea, but they struck me as seasonally appropriate—little green parcels made from banana leaves, so neatly wrapped they looked like they belonged under a Christmas tree. I found out later that they are the quintessential Puerto Rican holiday food—tamales made from green banana or plantain and yautia (a starchy locally grown tuber) that are so labor-intensive to prepare, you find them only on special occasions.

I unraveled the package on my plate. Inside was a deliciously sweet golden plantain paste, flavored with smoky pork, briny olives, and a hint of dried fruit, moister and more complex than any tamales I'd ever eaten. I caught Rosita and Goyin smiling as I enthusiastically unwrapped another. From that day forward, *pasteles* became my favorite holiday dish, and soon, that season became my favorite time to visit Puerto Rico.

NO ONE PROLONGS THE HOLIDAYS like Puerto Ricans: I realized this once Ronnie and I were married and started spending much of the Christmas season on the island. The celebration begins at Thanksgiving, kicking off two months of parties, both scheduled and spontaneous. The festivities gain momentum on Nochebuena and pick up steam on the way to New Year's; minor religious holidays like Día de los Inocentes (December 28) are celebrated with parades in the countryside and family meals. But the real climax of the season is Día de los Reyes, or Three Kings' Day, on January 6, which is followed by Octavitas, religiously known as "eight days of admiration," but commonly referred to as "one more week to party." Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián, a three-day Mardi Gras-style street festival, closes out the holidays in mid-January.

Ronnie's family has lived in Puerto Rico since their ancestors arrived from Spain in the 19th century, and they embrace the spirit of the season. I'll never forget the first time I was jolted out of bed in the middle of the night by a noisy *parranda*—a crowd of carolers singing traditional Spanish songs and threatening not to move on until invited into Ronnie's home for food and drink. Or learning to save an appetite for two dinners on Nochebuena: first at my father-in-law's, then at Ronnie's aunt's apartment. New Year's was marked by a party at the home of his uncle, Tio Richard, who always arranged a visit by *trovadores*, sharp-tongued musicians who improvised songs about the family.

But it's the novelty of Three Kings' Day that I adore most of all. On its eve, children leave a shoebox full of hay out for the Magi, who ostensibly trample through the house on camels during the night to leave gifts. In the morning, the kids awaken to find strewn hay and upturned fur-

NO ONE PROLONGS HOLIDAYS LIKE PUERTO RICANS. THE CELEBRATION BEGINS AT THANKSGIVING, KICKING OFF TWO MONTHS OF PARTIES, BOTH SCHEDULED AND SPONTANEOUS

niture. The adults feign outrage, while the children, still amazed by the miracle they had just witnessed, run to the gifts awaiting them. Later in the day, Ronnie's family heads to the countryside for yet another gigantic meal.

From family to family, feast to feast, the menu is usually the same. Typically, there's an assortment of *frituras*, like codfish fritters (called *bacalaitos*), and *tostones*, rounds of twice-fried green plantains. Guests gather around a buffet that features *pasteles*; *arroz con gandules*, rice cooked with pigeon peas; *guineos en escabeche*, pickled green bananas; *morcilla*, an intensely flavored, ebony-colored sausage made from pigs' blood and rice; and the main events—*lechón*, a whole spit-roasted pig, its juicy flesh encased in an outer layer of fat and crackling skin, and sometimes a *pavochon* (turkey seasoned and cooked in the style of the pork). Dessert is always *tembleque*, smooth coconut custard, and *coquito*, the rich Puerto Rican eggnog, made with coconut milk and rum.

How could I not love this food? The African, European, and Caribbean catalog that makes up *cocina Criolla*, as Puerto Ricans call it, is full of guilty pleasures—starchy vegetables, fatty meats, and all manner of things deep-fried. Many of my now-favorite indulgences are in season over the holidays, like *jueyes*, sweet and briny blue land crabs, stewed with a fragrant mix of tomato, garlic, pepper, and onion, and *lerenes*, a water chestnut-like corn root, eaten boiled with a sprinkling of salt. But others are available year-round. The pig, for example, rules in Puerto Rico. It's in everything—ham hocks enrich stews; pork belly flavors rice; cracklings made from rendering lard add depth to *mofongo*, a hearty plantain mash. It's a beast so celebrated that several towns across the island boast stretches of road lined with restaurants that specialize in *lechón*, whole-roasted young pigs. (See "Pork Is King," page 90.)

It was an obsessive admiration for this food that led me to volunteer to host last year's Three Kings' Day feast at my mother-in-law's country home in Canóvanas, up in the Sierra de Luquillo mountains, just a 30-minute ride from San Juan. I looked at it as payback for two decades as a party guest, but also as a way to chip away at my *gringa* status. And when I vowed to do it as traditionally as possible, my mother-in-law happily handed over the reins.

RONNIE'S FAMILY IS ENORMOUS: three half siblings, two step siblings, seven aunts and uncles, 23 first cousins, and too many extended (but just as dear) relatives to count. It was from this clan that I assembled my dream team of cooks, knowing full well that cooking for 70 was not a job for one person. Ronnie's first cousin (continued on page 92)

KATHLEEN SQUIRES is a food and travel writer in New York City. This is her first article for SAVEUR.



PORK IS KING

Lechón, roasted young pig (*lechón* refers to a piglet fed on its mother's milk, or *leche*), is both an essential part of the holiday table and Puerto Rico's national dish. The preparation of it is considered a time-honored craft, and the method has remained the same for centuries: The carcass of a juvenile pig is first rubbed with adobo spices, a simple blend that includes salt, pepper, and oregano. The seasoning then settles for a day or two, penetrating the skin and meat. The animal, which weighs usually no more than 100 pounds, is tied to a spit and roasted over coals in a steel or cinder block box, frequently turned sideways to release the grease from under the skin. The fat eventually renders out, and the skin, known as *cuerito*, becomes crackly and paper-thin. *Lechoneros* then butcher the

animal, and every part is consumed; even the innards, which are removed before the pig is roasted, are used to make *gandinga*, a stew said to soothe hangovers.

Christopher Columbus first introduced pigs to the island on his second voyage to the New World in 1493, adding meat to the vegetarian diet of the indigenous Taíno people. Over the centuries, it became common for families to keep a pig, fatten it up over the year, and cook the whole animal come holiday time so it wouldn't have to be fed over the lean winter months. Today, cafeteria-style restaurants known as *lechoneras* have replaced the family pig. These are humble, open-air eateries where locals go on weekends for feasting and fun, which can include dancing, live music, or



competitive games of dominos (another Puerto Rican obsession). In addition to the roasted pigs, *lechoneras* serve traditional sides, such as *arroz con gandules* (rice with pigeon peas) and *morcilla* (blood sausage), as well as drinks, like *mavi*, a fermented tree bark and sugar elixir.

There are several areas on the island known for their high concentration of *lechoneras*. The most famous of them, referred to as the *Ruta del Lechón*, or pork highway, lies 35 minutes outside of San Juan off Carretera 184 in Guavate, a town in the Sierra de Cayey Mountains with more than 20 *lechoneras*; each has its specialty. El Guavateño (Carretera 184, km. 27.9; 787/314-2433) is the only chef-driven *lechonera* on the strip. Chef Ricardo Cestero's creative touches include *lechón-Manchego* empanadas

as well as dumplings made with *morcilla*. At nearby El Rancho Original (Carretera 184, km 27.5; 787/747-7296), the *cuerito* is especially good, and the atmosphere especially lively—*viejos* (old-timers) are known to dance the salsa and merengue to live music. At Los Pinos (Carretera 184, km. 27.7; 787/286-1917), the flavorsome, tender *pavochon* (turkey roasted in the style of *lechón*) is not to be missed. Yet no matter the *lechonera*, pork aficionados know to show up early to claim the rare, delicious bits like the ears and tail. —K.S.

A cook hangs sausage links at El Rancho Original, a *lechonera* in Guavate, Puerto Rico, which specializes in whole roasted pigs.

**COCINA CRIOLLA,
AS PUERTO RICANS
CALL IT, IS FULL
OF GUILTY
PLEASURES—
STARCHY
VEGETABLES, FATTY
MEATS, AND ALL
MANNER OF THINGS
DEEP-FRIED**



(continued from page 89) Julie Carrión, 36, born in San Juan, is a talented caterer whose training brought her through the kitchens of chefs like Anita Lo and Daniel Boulud in New York City. Mario Ormaza, 30, the boyfriend of another first cousin, was my next recruit. He'd studied at the Culinary Institute of America, but more important, he knew pig. He knew where to source it. He knew how to season it. And he knew how to spit-roast the 95-pounder we'd be serving at the feast.

Fritter duty went to Ronnie's aunt Maresa Rodriguez, or *Titi Mare* as we call her, 72, who taught me to appreciate Puerto Rico's fried delights on countless road trips throughout the island, stopping off at one beach-side *kiosko* after the next. And cousin Roxana Matienzo, a 50-something attorney and author, agreed to show me how to make *pasteles*, something she'd learned from her parents. "We make a party of the whole process," Roxana told me.

A few days before the feast, I found out what she meant. A slew of cousins joined in and we sipped champagne as we peeled green bananas and yautia for the *pasteles'* filling in Roxana's kitchen. The palm trees outside fluttered as *aguinaldos*, traditional Christmas songs, blared through the speakers. Neighbors and relatives wandered in and out to have a drink and lend a hand.

After the green bananas and yautia had been puréed and blended with milk to make a smooth masa, we hacked banana leaves from Roxana's garden and boiled them until pliant. We added her signature touches to the filling—marcona almonds, palm dates, chickpeas, and olives. Then we fell into an assembly line. We cut the banana leaves into squares, placed them on foil, and brushed them with achiote oil. Down the line, we filled them with green banana and yautia paste; added the sautéed pork filling; and then folded them into perfect rectangles. We pinched the foil tight before tying them with string. Brush, fill, fold, tie. We did this about ten dozen times. As a reward for our hard work, we boiled a test batch for ourselves and enjoyed them in the garden as night fell.

The following day, Julie and I made a final shopping trip for the feast at the Plaza del Mercado in Santurce, a 19th-century market building in a residential part of the capital, which houses a dozen or so of the city's best produce vendors. We hauled out our bounty, stopping to order a couple of mango *batidas* (shakes) from a fruit stand outside the Mer-

From top: chicken and root vegetable soup, at Kasalta Bakery in San Juan (see a recipe on page 98); hot sauces at a food truck near Luquillo Beach; a codfish fritter with cod salsa (see a recipe on page 96). Facing page: the author's cousin-in-law Cecilia Carrión wraps *pasteles* (see a recipe on page 98).



cado, then drove to my mother-in-law's home, where Julie, Ronnie, and I cooked late into the night, serenaded by a chorus of chirping *coquitos*, the musical tree frogs of the island. We knocked holes into coconuts, extracted the water, and opened a stubborn few by slamming them on the ground. We scooped out the meat, then grated and strained it to make coconut milk. We set some of the milk in the fridge to thicken into *tembleque*, the dessert, and mixed the rest with condensed milk, eggs, and rum for *coquito*. Next, we peeled and boiled green bananas until they had the perfect al dente texture and marinated them with red onion, olives, and sherry vinegar for *guineos*. We made an enormous amount of *sofrito*—the base to practically every rice, soup, and stew in Puerto Rican cuisine—which is an essential component in many of our holiday dishes. Ours was a slow-cooked blend of onion, sweet and hot *aji* peppers, garlic, oil, and plenty of culantro, a robust herb with a deeper flavor than its cousin, cilantro. As the *sofrito* cooked down, taking on a deeply sweet aroma, I reflected on how these ingredients, which I once considered so foreign, were now as familiar to me as Ronnie and his family.

THE NEXT MORNING WE WERE awakened by Mario's truck horn, which he was excitedly honking. He had arrived with the hulking pig that would be the centerpiece of our meal, tied to a spit, in the back of his pickup. He had purchased our *lechón* two days earlier from a farmer in nearby Trujillo Alto, and then seasoned it by cutting slits under the legs and stuffing them with garlic, salt, pepper, and oregano. To further flavor and tenderize the pig, he rubbed the rest of it with sour orange juice, squeezed from an especially tart variety of citrus called *naranja agria* that he'd picked from trees in his garden.

A handmade galvanized-steel smoker waited on the grass for Mario to load with coal, which he placed at strategic corners at the bottom. "You start cooking near the legs, at the ends, then move the coal over to the middle," he told me, "because you don't want the ribs and loin

to overcook." He lit the coals, and about 20 minutes later, the pig was placed in the box; he covered the top with corrugated metal, then sat vigilantly by its side for the next six hours, turning the pig from side to side to release its grease and distribute its juices.

The smell of coal and pork wafted into the kitchen as Julie and I got to work on the *arroz con gandules*, cooking the rice in a *caldero*, or cast-iron pot. We dressed the dish with sour orange vinaigrette; put the *pasteles* on to boil; let the *guineos* sit at room temperature; grated some coconut on top of the *tembleque*; and shook the *coquito* until frothy.

Titi Mare came soon after and started in on the *frituras* as more family arrived. It was a beautiful Puerto Rican winter's afternoon: The sun was shining, the sky was blue, the temperature was a mild, breezy 80 degrees. *Titi* fried up *almojábanas*, rice-flour rounds with cheese; her son Felipe's signature *croquetas de pollo*, with a creamy chicken center; and *yautia*, the densest *fritura* of the bunch. I shuttled them to the guests, who were welcoming each other with hearty embraces. Ronnie tended bar, doling out wine, Cuba libres, and short glasses of *coquito*.

When the pig was ready, Mario butchered the browned beast, and we laid the food on a buffet table. The *cuero* (brown crispy skin) and the ears were the first to go. The loin was juicy, the ribs sublime. The *guineos* had the perfect acidic sting; the *pasteles* were golden as we unfolded their wrapping. I was proud of our feast: The rice went quickly, and family members scraped up the *pegao*, the coveted crispy bits at the bottom of the pot. The *tembleque* tasted as fresh as a newly opened coconut.

As the party wound down, I poured myself a glass of wine and took my spot at the domino table. I had earned a reputation as a formidable player, schooled by the family champions over the years. As the sun set, and laughter rose over the clack-clack-clack of the tiles, my mother-in-law made a toast to me for a successful party. I recognized her approving smile. She had inherited it from her aunts, Goyin and Rosita, the very ones who marveled two decades prior at my embracing of their nephew, their culture, and cuisine—*pasteles* and all. 

The Guide San Juan, Puerto Rico

Dinner with drinks and tip: Inexpensive \$10–\$25 Moderate \$25–\$50 Expensive Over \$50

Visitors to San Juan during the holidays are apt to run into celebrations wherever they go. To plan a trip to Puerto Rico, visit seepuertorico.com.

WHERE TO STAY

Tres Palmas Inn 2212 Park Boulevard (866/372-5627; trespalmasinn.com). Doubles from \$109. Tropical colors and island art decorate the 18 rooms at this beachfront inn in the Ocean Park neighborhood of San Juan. A pool and Jacuzzi afford private dips between jaunts to the beach.

Conrad Condado Plaza 999 Avenida Ashford (888/722-1274; condadoplaza.com). Doubles from \$249. Sleek design, a beach that's superb for snorkeling, and rooms with soaring ocean views set this casino hotel apart, as do two restaurants by Wilo Benet, Puerto Rico's most celebrated chef.

WHERE TO EAT

Cafeteria Mallorca 300 Calle

San Francisco (787/724-4607). *Inexpensive*. This diner-like spot in Old San Juan is the local choice for breakfast. Veteran servers, clad in paper hats, vests, and bowties, plate *mallorcas*, doughy buns topped with powdered sugar.

Kasalta Bakery 1966 Calle McLeary (787/727-7340; kasalta.com). *Inexpensive*. Patrons drink in gossip



and *café con leche* at this Ocean Park landmark. Foods like *pernil* (pork shoulder) sandwiches pack the display cases. This is also where locals pick up boxes of *turrón* (nougat candy) or cured ham to give as holiday gifts.

Café Puerto Rico 208 Calle O'Donnell (787/724-2281; cafepuertorico.com). *Moderate*. This restaurant, set inside a quaint Old San Juan townhouse, turns out excellent local fare. Try their seasonal "holiday plate," complete with *pasteles*, *arroz con gandules*, *morcilla*, and *lechón*.

Waterfront Carretera 187, km 5, Piñones (787/791-5989). *Moderate*. This lovely ocean-side restaurant on the Piñones boardwalk is the ideal spot to enjoy local specialties like *pastelillos*, savory pastries that are stuffed with *chapín* (trunkfish).

Jam Rum Bar and Bistro Moderne 1400 Avenida Magdalena (787/721-5991). *Expensive*. Rum lovers flock to this stylish Condado bistro for 50 varieties of the spirit and clever takes on traditional fare like *tripleta* empanadas filled with chicken, beef, and pork, and served with a horseradish dipping sauce.

THINGS TO DO

Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián Old San Juan, January 12–15, 2012 (sansepr.ning.com). This three-day street party in Old San Juan signals the end of the holiday season. Calle San Sebastián may be the hub of the action, but dancing, music, street food, and masked parades are found throughout the old city.

Plaza del Mercado de Santurce Calle Dos Hermanos at Calle Capitol, San Juan (787/723-8022). A dozen produce stands in this market brim with tropical staples like plantains, yucca, papaya, and *guanábana* (soursop). Look for signs that read "se vende pasteles" indicating vendors who sell the local specialty. When the market shuts down at night, a young crowd transforms the space into one of the city's liveliest social scenes; it's a great spot to catch a roving *parranda*, or group of carolers, during the holiday season. —K.S.



A customer at El Rancho Original, a *lechonera* in Guavate

Almojábanas

(Cheese Fritters)

MAKES ABOUT 40 FRITTERS

These *frituras*, or fritters (pictured at right), are a popular snack in Puerto Rico.

- Canola oil, for frying
- 2 cups milk
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 cups rice flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 8 oz. queso blanco or mozzarella, shredded

Pour oil to a depth of 2" into a 6-qt. Dutch oven; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 375°. Boil milk, butter, and salt in a 4-qt. saucepan over high heat; let cool for 10 minutes. Stir in flour, baking powder, and eggs; return to heat and cook, stirring, until dough thickens, about 8 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in cheese. Drop tablespoons of dough into oil; fry until golden brown, about 2 minutes.

Arroz con Gandules

(Rice and Pigeon Peas)

SERVES 6-8

This satisfying rice dish (pictured at right) is great served alongside roast pork or *pasteles*.

- 3 tbsp. canola oil
 - 2 oz. bacon, cut into ¼" cubes
 - ½ cup sofrito (see recipe on page 98)
 - ½ small yellow onion, minced
 - 2 cups long-grain white rice
 - 2 tbsp. tomato paste
 - 2 cups chicken stock
 - 1 tsp. dried oregano
 - ½ 7-oz. jar mixed olives, capers, and pimientos
 - 1 15-oz. can pigeon peas, drained
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat oil in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add bacon; cook until browned, about 5 minutes. Add sofrito and onion; cook until soft, about 8 minutes. Add rice and tomato paste; cook until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Add stock, oregano, and olive mix; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until rice is tender, about 30 minutes; stir in peas. Cook for 10 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper before serving.

Bacalaítos Fritos con Bacalao Guisado

(Codfish Fritters with Cod Salsa)



Clockwise, from top left: pickled green bananas; mashed plantains with tomato sauce; cheese fritters; plantain fritters with stewed shrimp; rice and pigeon peas; fried plantain meat pies.

MAKES 12 FRITTERS

Salt cod does double duty in this fritter topped with piquant cod salsa (pictured on 92).

- 1½ lb. salt cod
- 1 cup, plus 1 tbsp. canola oil
- ½ tsp. achiote seeds (see page 106)
- ¾ cup sofrito (see recipe on page 98)
- ½ cup whole, peeled, canned tomatoes in juice, crushed
- 3 plum tomatoes, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 4 sprigs cilantro, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced



1 To make salsa, place cod in a 2-qt. saucepan, and cover by 2" with cold water; boil for 20 minutes. Drain cod, return to saucepan, and repeat process twice more. Transfer cod to a bowl, and flake with a fork into large chunks; set aside. Heat 1 tbsp. oil and achiote in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat until oil turns red; remove and discard achiote. Add sofrito, tomatoes, bay leaf, and salt and pepper; cook until thickened, about 15 minutes. Add two thirds of the cod; cook for 5 minutes. Let cool.

2 To make batter, whisk flour, baking powder, cilantro, and garlic in a bowl. Stir in remaining cod and 1½ cups water until smooth. Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, pour ¼ cup batter into skil-

let; cook, flipping once, until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Drain fritters; top with salsa to serve.

Coquito

(Puerto Rican Eggnog)

MAKES 5 CUPS

Coconut and rum flavor this tropical eggnog (pictured on page 86).

- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups Puerto Rican rum
- 4 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- Ground cinnamon and sticks, to garnish

Blend milks, rum, and yolks in a blender until frothy; chill. Pour into glasses, sprinkle with cinnamon, and serve with cinnamon sticks.

Guineos en Escabeche

(Pickled Green Bananas)

MAKES ABOUT 8 CUPS

Unripe, green bananas pickled in a garlicky brine (pictured at left) make a refreshing condiment alongside the roast pork shoulder.

- 12 oz. green bananas, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 2½ cups olive oil
- ¾ cup white wine vinegar
- 1½ tbsp. kosher salt
- 12 whole black peppercorns
- 6 cloves garlic
- 6 small red onions, sliced thin
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cups pitted green olives
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice

Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add bananas; cook until just tender, about 15 minutes. Drain; set aside. Boil oil, vinegar, salt, peppercorns, garlic, onions, and bay leaves in a 4-qt. saucepan over high heat until onions and garlic are soft, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in boiled bananas, olives, and juice. Chill overnight to marry flavors.

Mofongo con Salsa de Tomate

(Mashed Plantains with Tomato Sauce)

SERVES 6

Mashed with bacon and garlic, this plantain dish (pictured above) is served with a quick tomato sauce.

- Canola oil, for frying
- 5 plantains, peeled, cut into 1" chunks, soaked in hot water
- ¾ cup chicken stock
- 8 oz. bacon, cut into ¼" cubes
- 7 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly



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Photo Credit: Martin Wonnacott.

- ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 small yellow onion, minced
 - 1 28-oz. can whole, peeled tomatoes, drained and crushed
- Shredded iceberg lettuce and tomato wedges, to serve

1 Pour canola oil to a depth of 2" into a 6-qt. Dutch oven; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 325°. Drain and dry plantains; fry until tender, about 6 minutes. Finely chop plantains in a food processor with stock; set aside. Cook bacon in a 10" skillet over medium heat until browned, about 15 minutes. Stir bacon and fat into plantains with half the garlic and 5 tbsp. olive oil; season with salt and pepper; set mofongo aside.

2 Heat remaining olive oil in skillet over medium heat. Add remaining garlic and onions; cook until soft, about 15 minutes. Add tomatoes; cook until broken down, about 10 minutes. To serve, spoon mofongo into a 8-oz. ramekin; invert onto a serving plate garnished with lettuce and tomato wedges; top with sauce.

Pasteles

(Green Banana and Pork Tamales)

SERVES 16

These flavorful tamales (pictured on page 88) are sold from street stands during the holidays in Puerto Rico.

- ¾ cup canola oil
- 1 tbsp. achiote seeds (see page 106)
- 1 lb. pork loin, cut into ½" cubes
- 8 oz. ham, cut into ½" cubes
- ¾ cup pitted dates, minced
- 2 tbsp. fresh orange juice
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 tbsp. dried oregano
- 2 tsp. capers, minced
- 12 pitted green olives, minced
- 4 sprigs cilantro, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small yellow onion, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- ½ green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- ½ 15-oz. can chickpeas, drained
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 lb. white yautia or taro, peeled, rinsed, and grated
- 2 lb. green bananas, peeled and grated
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup blanched whole almonds

1 To make filling, heat oil and achiote in a 1-qt. saucepan over high heat until oil turns red; remove and discard achiote. Mix ¼ cup achiote

oil, pork, ham, dates, juices, oregano, capers, olives, cilantro, garlic, onions, peppers, chickpeas, and salt and pepper in a bowl; chill. To make the dough, process remaining achiote oil, yautia, bananas, and milk in a food processor until smooth.

2 To form the pasteles, spread ¼ cup of the dough onto a 5" x 3½" rectangle in center of a 12" square of banana leaf or parchment paper; place 3 tbsp. filling over dough; top with 5–6 almonds. Fold square in half so dough encloses filling; continue folding under the open top and sides to form a tight package. Wrap package tightly in a 12" square of foil; repeat with remaining dough and filling. Bring an 8-qt. saucepan of water to a boil; add packets. Simmer until filling is cooked through, about 1 hour. Drain and cool before serving.

Pernil Asado

(Roast Pork Shoulder)

SERVES 8

We adapted the recipe for *lechón*, a roasted whole pig, for pork shoulder (pictured on page 86).

- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup kosher salt
- ¼ cup ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. dried oregano
- 2 tbsp. ground cumin
- 40 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 8-lb. bone-in, skin-on pork picnic shoulder

Mix juice, vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, oil, oregano, cumin, and garlic in a bowl; set marinade aside. Using a paring knife, cut 1½"-wide, 1"-deep slits all over pork in a roasting pan; pour marinade over pork. Chill, turning pork every few hours, for at least 6 hours. Heat oven to 325°. Roast pork, basting with marinade every 30 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part reads 190°, about 5 hours. Let rest before serving.

Piononos

(Fried Plantain Meat Pies)

SERVES 12

These fried pies (pictured on page 96) are stuffed with classic picadillo.

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 1½ tsp. ground achiote (see page 106)
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1½ lb. ground beef chuck
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¼ cup roughly chopped pimiento-stuffed green olives
- ½ 32-oz. can whole, peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 5 ripe plantains, peeled, cut lengthwise into ¼" slices
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tbsp. flour
- 1 cup canola oil

1 To make filling, heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onion; cook until soft, about 3 minutes. Add achiote, cumin, cinnamon, and oregano; cook for 1 minute. Add beef; cook until browned, about 6 minutes. Add raisins, olives, and tomatoes; cook until thickened, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; cool.

2 To make pies, shape two plantain slices into a 4" cylinder, overlapping their ends, and securing with toothpicks. Repeat to make 12 cylinders. Stuff cylinders with ¼ cup of the filling. Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Whisk together eggs, flour, and 1 tbsp. water in a bowl. Working in batches, dip pies in egg mixture, and add to skillet; fry, turning once, until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Sancocho

(Chicken and Root Vegetable Soup)

SERVES 6–8

This Puerto Rican chicken soup is hearty with starchy vegetables (pictured on page 92).

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 1 plum tomato, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- 10 cups chicken stock
- 8 sprigs cilantro
- 8 skinless chicken thighs
- 8 oz. red potatoes, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and sliced crosswise
- 1 large green plantain, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 2 oz. spaghetti, broken in half
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium heat; add garlic, onions, and tomatoes; cook until soft, about 8 minutes. Add stock, cilantro, and chicken; cook for 20 minutes. Add

potatoes, carrots, and plantain; cook until everything is tender, about 25 minutes. Remove and shred chicken, discarding bones and fat. Add chicken to pot along with spaghetti. Cook until pasta is al dente, about 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Sofrito

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

This multipurpose seasoning base forms the foundation of numerous dishes in Puerto Rico.

- 8 oz. ham, chopped
- 2 tbsp. minced fresh oregano
- 15 sprigs cilantro, chopped
- 10 cloves garlic, chopped
- 5 cubanelle or banana peppers, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 4 large yellow onions, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- ¾ cup canola oil

Finely chop all ingredients in a food processor. Heat in a 12" skillet over medium-low heat; cook until very soft, about 20 minutes. Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Tostones con Camarones Guisados

(Plantain Fritters with Stewed Shrimp)

SERVES 6–8

In this recipe, simple fried plantains are topped with a bright shrimp and tomato sauce (pictured on page 96).

- 1 tbsp. canola oil, plus more
- 8 oz. large shrimp, peeled, deveined, and finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. sofrito (see recipe, above)
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 plum tomato, finely chopped
- 3 green plantains, cut diagonally into 1" thick rounds
- 2 tbsp. kosher salt

1 To make shrimp, heat 1 tbsp. oil in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Add shrimp, sofrito, tomato paste, and tomato; cook until shrimp are cooked through, about 6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; chill.

2 To make fritters, pour oil to a depth of 2" in a 6-qt. Dutch oven; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Fry plantains until soft, about 8 minutes. Drain; smash each piece into a disk with the back of a skillet. Increase oil temperature to 375°. Fry disks until crisp, about 4 minutes; drain. Arrange fritters on a platter; top with shrimp salsa.



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It is no secret that Belgian beers are known to be some of the best beers to cook with and the Ommegang Abbey Ale is no exception. With hints of dark fruit and spice, this dubbel is a perfect addition to a traditional French onion soup. Adding it to the beef stock helps the sweetness of the malt work in unison with the flavors of the caramelized onions while the fruit and alcohol penetrate the strong flavor of a good Gruyère cheese. The slight booziness works like a fine sherry finishing off the ensemble.

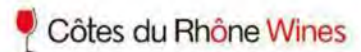
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IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques From Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman

*Achiote seeds in
their pods*

Seeing Red

AS WE TESTED RECIPES for this issue's story on Christmas in Puerto Rico ("Island Holiday," page 84), one ingredient in particular caught our eye: achiote seeds. They're used in cooking to do just that, imparting a beautiful orangeish hue to all kinds of dishes. Their festive color makes them a natural addition to Puerto Rican holiday fare like *pasteles* (green banana and pork tamales) and *piononos* (fried plantain meat pies). And their flavor is unlike any other: fruity, slightly musky, and flinty at the same time. Also known as *annatto*, this spice is a recurring, subtle but unmistakable note in many Latin American and Caribbean cuisines—the crucial earthy flavor that provides balance in everything from the citrusy *recado rojo* marinade of Mexico's Yucatan to the tomato-based seafood stew *moqueca capix-*

aba of Brazil's northeast.

Harvested from the spiny red fruit of the achiote tree (*Bixa orellana*), which is native to the Americas and now grows in tropical Asia and Africa, too, the seeds contain a pigment called bixin, traditionally used not only in cooking but also as a sunscreen and body paint; today, it's used around the world in industrial food production to enhance the color of cheese, margarine, and other foods. In the United States, achiote seeds can be found in the specialty food aisles of most supermarkets. To extract their vivid color and distinctive flavor, simmer them in a neutral-flavored oil such as canola over low heat for several minutes, and then strain out the seeds. What's left behind is liquid gold that will keep in the refrigerator for several weeks. —Victoria Cannizzo

Rainbow Cookies

MAKES ABOUT 10 DOZEN

This recipe, from *SAVEUR* executive editor Dana Bowen, calls for almond pastry filling in place of the almond paste typically used to make these cookies, for a lighter, moister result.

- 1½ cups unsalted butter, softened, plus more for pans
- 2 cups flour, plus more for pans
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 12.5-oz. can almond pastry filling, such as Solo brand
- 4 eggs
- 12 drops green food coloring
- 12 drops red food coloring
- 1 12-oz. seedless raspberry jam
- 12 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted

1 Heat oven to 350°. Grease and flour three 9" x 13" baking pans and line with parchment paper; set aside. Using a hand mixer on high speed, beat butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add pastry filling; beat until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add flour; beat until just combined. Evenly divide batter into 3 bowls. Add green food coloring to one bowl, red food coloring to the second bowl, and leave the third bowl plain; stir colorings into batters. Using an offset spatula, spread each batter into a prepared baking pan. Bake each pan until just beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks; cool.

2 Heat jam in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium heat; cook, stirring, until smooth; cool slightly. Place green cake on a cutting board or foil-lined baking sheet. Using an offset spatula, spread half the jam over green cake; top with plain cake. Spread remaining jam over plain cake; top with red cake. Chill cakes to set jam, 1 hour.

3 Using a slicing knife, trim cake edges to form an even block. Slice block crosswise into 1½"-wide logs; separate on a cutting board. Using an offset spatula, spread chocolate over top, sides, and ends of each log until completely covered; chill to set chocolate. Slice each log crosswise into ½"-thick squares to serve.



Rainbow Bright

Italian-Americans love to show off their cooking (see "Italian America," page 53), and at Christmastime in our Italian-American household, cookies were a major production. My grandmother baked nonstop in the days leading up to the holidays. She made Americanized chocolate chip and sugar cookies, but her specialty was traditional Italian cookies. She used a pastry bag to shape cherry almond stars and airy pignoli cookies, and an ice cream scoop to make perfectly round butter cookies, which she blanketed with rainbow sprinkles. They looked so nice that Uncle Joe used to tell her to pick up a shift at DeLuca's, the local bakery. My favorites were her rainbow cookies, which we called stoplights: three thin cakes—one red, one green, one white, like the Italian flag—stacked on top of one another and cut into cubes, with raspberry jam between the layers and a veneer of semisweet chocolate on top. Some years the kids would help her make the cookies, but what we really loved was helping her wrap them as gifts. The goal was to eat as many as you packaged. We wrapped the piles of cookies in cellophane right on Grandma's china. If you received a gift of cookies, and you wanted to get another one next year, you made sure to wash and return the dish. Otherwise, you were off the list for good. —Greg Ferro

Daily Bread

IF PUERTO RICANS COULD live by bread alone, they would surely opt for *pan de Mallorca*. I've been traveling to Puerto Rico to visit my husband's family for 21 years (see "Island Holiday," page 84), and I well remember the first time I laid eyes on the puffy rounds at a San Juan bakery. I had to have one. Fluffy, eggy, buttery, sweet, coiled like a snail's shell and generously dusted with powdered sugar, it easily filled my outstretched hand.

Pan de Mallorca is named for its island of origin, in Spain. Mallorcans were among the largest immigrant groups in Puerto Rico in the 19th century, and they left an indelible mark on Puerto Rican cuisine; it was a Mallorcan who opened the island's first restaurant, La Mallorquina, in 1848. Around the same time, Mallorcans' sweet roll found its way into *panaderías* (bakeries) across the island.

Known as *ensaimadas* in their homeland, these pastries were once reserved for holidays. Leave it to



Puerto Ricans to turn special occasion food into an everyday thing. They eat *Mallorcas* for breakfast any day of the year, sometimes plain, sometimes halved and toasted to make a sandwich—also called a *Mallorca*—filled with American or Swiss cheese, ham or bacon, and, often, fried eggs.

My in-laws buy their *Mallorcas* fresh from the oven, usually at Panificadora Pepin (261 Avenue Jesus T. Piñero, Rio Piedras; 787/751-6849), a place with a line perpetually snaking out the door. They move some 2,000 *Mallorcas* a day at La Bombonera (259 Calle San Francisco, Old San Juan; 787/722-0658), founded in 1902, but I'm equally fond of its neighbor, the classic Cafeteria Mallorca (300 Calle San Francisco, Old San Juan; 787/724-4607). My husband likes to kick off a visit with a Mallorca sandwich at his favorite *panadería*, Kasalta (1966 McCleary, Ocean Park; 787/727-7340). And if there's time on our way out of town, we'll stop at Panadería España (1105 Marginal Villamar, Isla Verde; 787/727-3860), near the airport, for one last *Mallorca* to tide us over until we return. —Kathleen Squires



Mallorcas

(Puerto Rican Ham and Egg Sandwiches)

SERVES 6

- 1 ¼-oz. package active dry yeast
- ½ cup milk
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing
- 3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 2½ cups flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 6 eggs
- 18 slices deli ham
- 12 oz. sliced cheddar cheese
- Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

1 Make the rolls: Combine yeast and ¼ cup water heated to 115° in a bowl; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Stir in milk, 4 tbsp. butter, and egg yolks until smooth. Add flour, sugar, and salt; stir until dough forms. Transfer to a work surface; knead until smooth, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let sit until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

2 Transfer dough to a floured work surface and, using a rolling pin, roll into a 18" x 8" rectangle. Brush with 2 tbsp. butter; starting at one short end, roll into a tight cylinder. Cut cylinder into 6 equal pieces; transfer, cut side-down, to a greased 9" x 13" baking pan. Cover with plastic wrap; let sit until doubled in size, about 1½–2 hours. Heat oven to 375°. Bake until lightly browned, about 18 minutes. Let cool completely.

3 Make the sandwiches: Heat 2 tbsp. butter in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add 3 eggs; cook, turning, until yolk is just set, about 3 minutes. Repeat with 2 tbsp. butter and remaining eggs. Split each roll; place 3 slices ham onto each roll bottom. Top with an egg, 2 oz. cheddar, and roll tops. Return skillet to medium-high heat; add 2 tbsp. butter. Add 2 sandwiches; cook, flipping and flattening with a spatula, until browned, about 6 minutes. Repeat with remaining butter and sandwiches. Halve sandwiches, and dust with confectioners' sugar while hot before serving.



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The Whole Goose

Before the turkey supplanted it in the 19th century, the goose was the bird of choice for festive holiday meals (see "The Glories of Goose," page 76). Even today, the way geese are raised harks back to another era. Schiltz Goose Farms in Sisseton, South Dakota, accounts for 90 percent of the goose meat produced commercially in the U.S., though the scale we're talking about is minuscule compared with the typical turkey or chicken producer. Unlike those birds, geese have never been raised in close confinement; Schiltz, a family-run operation founded in the 1940s, provides plenty of room to roam. "The geese are just happier that way," says owner Jim Schiltz. And while chickens are butchered year-round, goose farming hews to the natural life cycle of the bird. Eggs are laid in the spring. In June, the flock leaves the hatchery to spend the summer outdoors, noshing on fresh grass and corn. By late October, the geese are ready for slaughter. In the kitchen, goose is a gift that keeps on giving: The meat is rich and flavorful, and each part of the bird can be put to use in different preparations. Below, tips from Jim Schiltz on how to use every last bit, whether you're buying a whole goose or individual parts sold separately. —Hilary Merzbacher



Fat: Rendered at home—simply a matter of capturing and straining what ends up in the pan after cooking goose—or purchased in a tub, goose fat will keep in the refrigerator for up to six months. Flavorful, with a high smoke point, it's especially good for frying potatoes and other root vegetables. It's also delicious in baked goods.



Leg Quarters: The succulent leg and thigh portion of the goose is perfect for making confit (see page 82 for a recipe). Schiltz also recommends roasting leg quarters on their own, which takes a fraction of the time required to roast an entire bird.

Liver: Goose liver is a classic ingredient in terrines (see page 82 for a recipe); simply pan-fried and seasoned with salt and pepper, it makes a delicious main course in itself. The fattier Late Harvest livers sold by Schiltz are a humane alternative to foie gras, produced without force-feeding the birds.



Whole Goose: A whole roast goose (see page 82 for a recipe) makes a grand main course for a festive meal. The bird is 100 percent dark meat, richer than turkey and more flavorful. The leg meat is particularly luscious, and the breast, roasted and sliced across the grain, is reminiscent of steak.

Smoked Whole Goose: Schiltz Goose Farms is now smoking and packaging whole geese, which arrive fully cooked and can be eaten cold, at room temperature, or warmed in the oven. The tender, hickory-smoked meat can be used as you might bacon or ham on salads, sandwiches, and more.



Giblets: The goose's flavorful heart and gizzard can be simmered until tender in salted water, and the resulting broth can be used to make gravy (see page 82 for a recipe) or to flavor stuffing or risotto. The giblets also bring depth and richness to stocks.

Wings: Along with the goose's neck, the wings can be used to add flavor and body to stocks and soups.

Neck: The neck can be roasted alongside the bird and enjoyed for its supremely rich and flavorful meat. It also brings great flavor and viscosity to stocks.



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THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered ingredients and information too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!

BY BEN MIMS

Fare

To purchase **vintage citrus crate labels**, contact Robert Booth (818/809-8855; labelbroker@aol.com), or visit his online store (stores.ebay.com/paper-addiction). When in West Virginia, eat breakfast at **The Greenbrier** (300 West Main Street, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia; 800/453-4858; greenbrier.com) and sample the resort's corned beef hash. For more information on visiting **Tokyo's Kitchen Town**, contact the Japan National Tourism Organization (212/757-5640; japan.travelinfo.com). To make the black pepper tofu recipe (see page 22), purchase **kecap manis (sweet soy sauce)**, available from Online Food Grocery.com (\$4.49 for a 20.9-ounce bottle; 800/720-9350; onlinefoodgrocery.com). Purchase the **Germain-Robin Coast Road Reserve California Brandy** from Germain-Robin (\$65 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 800/782-8145; germain-robin.com); the **Osocalis Rare Alambic Brandy** from Osocalis Distillery (\$45 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 831/426-6209; osocalis.com); and the **NV Etude XO Alambic Brandy** from Etude Wines (\$150 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 877/586-9361; etudewines.com).

Cellar

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erdowines.com); the **Ruca Malen Yaquen Malbec 2010**, contact Opici Wines (\$12 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 201/689-3256; opiciwines.com); the **Susana Balbo Signature Malbec 2008** (\$25 for a 750-milliliter bottle), **Susana Balbo Crios 2008** (\$15 for a 750-milliliter bottle), **Tikal Patriota 2009** (\$20 for a 750-milliliter bottle), and **La Posta Cocina Tinto 2009** (\$15 for a 750-milliliter bottle), contact Vine Connections (415/332-8466; vineconnections.com); the **Bodega Acha-val Ferrer Fina Altamira 2009**, contact TGIC Importers (\$120 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 800/924-0030; tgicimporters.com); the **Bodegas Nieto Senetiner Bonarda Reserva 2009** (\$15 for a 750-milliliter bottle), **Bodegas Nieto Senetiner Bonarda Limited Edition** (\$34 for a 750-milliliter bottle), and **Bodegas Nieto Senetiner Torrontes 2010** (\$12 for a 750-milliliter bottle), contact Winebow (winebow.com); the **La Puerta Gran Reserva Bonarda 2007**, contact Eco Valley Wines (\$35 for a 750-milliliter bottle; ecovalleywines.com); the **Trapiche Broquel Torrontes 2010**, contact Frederick Wildman, (\$15 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 800/733-9463; frederickwildman.com); the **Argento Torrontes Procedencia Salta 2010** (\$12 for a 750-milliliter bottle) and **Argento Pinot Grigio 2010** (\$12 for a 750-milliliter bottle), contact Lion Nathan (913/338-2281; lion-nathan.com); the **Bodega NQN Malma Finca La Papay Pinot Noir 2010**, contact Vias Wine (\$13 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 212/629-0200; viaswine.com); the **Bodega Chacra Barda Pinot Noir**, contact Kobrand Corporation (\$20 for a 750-milliliter bottle; 800/946-3110; kobrandwineandspirits.com); the **Zorzal Climax Malbec 2008** (\$43 for a 750-milliliter bottle) and **Zorzal Sauvignon**

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Reporter

To make the Yule log cake with coffee buttercream and ganache (see page 38), purchase **edible gold dust**, available from N.Y. Cake and Baking Distributor (\$8 for a one half-ounce container; 800/942-2539; nycake.com). For various **pipings tips**, including the plain and star tips needed to pipe the meringue decorations, go to Chef Tools.com (\$11.79 for a 6-piece large decorating set; 206/933-0700; cheftools.com).

Classic

To make the Swedish meatballs with mashed potatoes recipe (see page 50), purchase **lingonberry preserves**, available from iGourmet.com (\$7.99 for a 14-ounce jar; 877/446-8763; igourmet.com).

Italian America

To serve the rabbit ragù with spinach garganelli recipe (see page 73), buy **spinach penne**, available from NetGrocer.com (\$3.85 for a 1-pound box; 888/638-4762; netgrocer.com)

or **garganelli**, available from Flora Fine Foods (\$3.50 for an 17.6-ounce package; 954/785-3100; florafloods.com).

Christmas Goose

To make the Christmas goose with stuffing recipe (see page 82), purchase a **whole goose with giblets**, available from Schiltz Goose Farm (\$58.50 for a 12–14-pound goose; see "Kitchen," below), where you can also purchase **rendered goose fat** (\$6.90 for a 2.5-pound container) to make the goose liver terrines recipe (see page 82), rosemary popovers recipe (see page 82), turnips with candied bacon recipe (see page 82), and goose confit and fig salad recipe (see page 82), which also calls for **whole goose leg quarters** (\$26.25 for 4–6 pounds).

Puerto Rico

To prepare the cheese fritters recipe (see page 96), use **rice flour**, available from ImportFood.com (\$2.39 for a 16-ounce bag; 888/618-8424; importfood.com). To make the codfish fritters with cod salsa recipe (see page 96) and the green banana and pork tamales recipe (see page 98), buy **achiote seeds**, available from Gourmet Sleuth (\$3.50 for a 2.5-ounce container; 408/354-8281; gourmetsleuth.com), which also carries **ground achiote** (\$7.95 for a 2-ounce container), called for in the fried plantain meat pies recipe (see page 98).

Kitchen

To purchase whole geese or parts for making the goose recipes (see page 82), including the rendered fat, neck, wings, and giblets, whole goose, leg quarters, livers, and whole smoked goose, contact **Schiltz Goose Farms Inc.** in Sisseton, South Dakota (605/698-7651; roastgoose.com).



This product is from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources.

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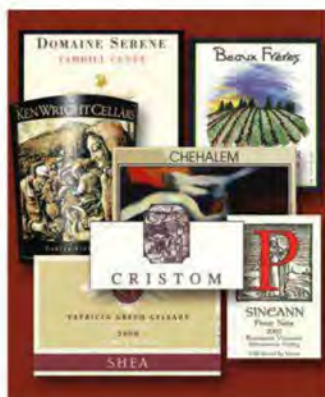


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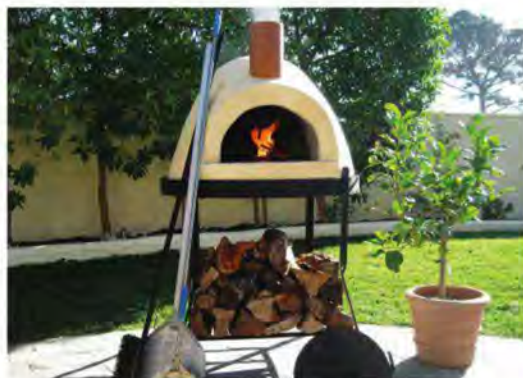


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